



**PERCEPTIONS OF INTERCULTURAL MARRIAGE: THE  
LIVED EXPERIENCES OF SOUTH AFRICANS AND AFRICAN  
FORIEGNS IN INTERCULTURAL MARRIAGE.**

By

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## DECLARATION

I Andiswa Prettyangel Tshibangu declare that the thesis entitled, “Perceptions of intercultural marriage: the lived experiences of South Africans and African foreigners in intercultural marriage” is my own work and that all the references used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged.

Signature of student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Abstract**

Over the years there has been an increase in migration of immigrants from African countries to South Africa. This migration has led to even more cultural diversity in South Africa. Romantic relationships which lead to intermarriage between African migrants and black South Africans are becoming more prevalent in society. This has created a need for intermarriage to be understood and theorized in an African context. The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of intermarried South Africans born nationals and African migrants. Perceptions about intermarriage according to both intermarried couples and the public were explored. Another aim of the study was to ascertain if intermarriage helps the assimilation process of the migrant spouse. To gather the descriptive narratives of intermarried couples and the public this study made use of semi structured and open –ended interview questions. The primary findings of this study showed that individual, structural and contextual factors affect how couples experienced being intermarried. Intermarried couples are negatively affected by external stressors .These stressors are namely family and societal disapproval, institutional discrimination and lack of social support. These factors are mainly based on how the family and public perceive African migrants and those who decided to marry them. Based on negative perceptions held against intermarriages in South Africa it can be concluded that intermarriages do not necessarily help assimilate the African migrant spouse. Finally this study also showed that besides external factors that impact intermarried experiences each couple has internal challenges that stem from being culturally different. Major life decisions such as identity, religion, child rearing methods and gender roles were a challenge as each individual in the marriage was socialised in a different culture.

## **Chapter one: Contextual and theoretical framework of the study**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Marriage is a celebrated rite of passage in Africa where two people profess and declare their love for each other. This union has been studied by many scholars across various disciplines because it is the foundation and pillar which society is built on of. Marriage is a union between two people governed by a religious or Godly covenant, legal contract or cultural union. Over the years the definition of marriage has evolved hence there are different definitions of intermarriage based on the social context in which they occur in .In many societies the norm is to marry someone from the same cultural group however with phenomenal such as globalization and technology advancements it is now easier to meet and communicate with people from various parts off the world. The embracing and acceptance of racial, cultural and ethnicity differences among people as reflected in constitutions across the world makes it possible for people to form romantic love relationships that lead into diverse people getting married. Marriage and the decision to marry does not only involve the couple but it is influenced by family, friends, religion, culture and policies amongst other factors. It then becomes important investigate how all these impact marriages. Intermarriages are of particular interest of study as they to a certain extent bring about unconventional change and dynamics to societies.

### **1.2 Definition of concepts**

**Intermarriage** - intermarried couple can be defined as the marriage between two people of different nationalities which may or may not include differences in race, ethnicity, religion, and language. Silva, Campbell, & Wright (2012:857).Smith (1996:4) states that intermarriage “Denotes marriage across religious, racial, ethnic, or other social divisions”.

**Phenomenology** – ‘It involves the use of thick description and close analysis of lived experience to understand how meaning is created through embodied perception (Sokolowski, 2000; Stewart & Mickunas, 1974) cited in Starks & Brown (2007). Starks and Brown (2007: 1373) Phenomenology contributes to deeper understanding of lived experiences by exposing taken-for granted assumptions about these ways of knowing.

**Foreigner** – The oxford dictionary defines a foreigner as a person born in or coming from a country other than one's own. In the South African context, the term foreigner is used to describe a black African migrant.

**Xenophobia** -The fear or hatred of foreigners or strangers; it is embodied in discriminatory attitudes and behaviour, and often culminates in violence, abuses of all types, and exhibitions of hatred (Mogekwu 2005) cited in Solomon & Kosaka(2013:5) Xenophobia in South Africa: Reflections, Narratives and. Xenophobia, simply put, is the fear or hatred of foreigners or strangers; it is embodied in discriminatory attitudes and behavior, and often culminates in violence, abuses of all types, and exhibitions of hatred.

**Amakwerekwere**- ‘Makwerekwere’ is a slang word for foreigners, especially illegal immigrants, which implies different things in different milieus. The term implies ‘a black person who cannot demonstrate mastery of the local South African languages, and one who hails from a country assumed to be economically and culturally backward in relation to South Africa’ (Nyamnjoh, 2006: 39) as cited by Lukong. (2011:134).

**Assimilation**- assimilation is a process whereby the social, economic, and cultural differences between migrants and natives are narrowed or completely eliminated over a long period of time.

### **1.3 Background and Context of the Study**

In South Africa intermarriages, then commonly referred to as mixed marriages were a criminal offence as the country was highly segregationally. Laws were put in place to separate people according to their race. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, Act No 55 of 1949 was the law enforced to prevent people to engage in mixed marriages. At that time of Apartheid race was the main factor considered to define an intermarriage. Though the laws have been abolished because of democracy they did leave a legacy of separation and ‘othering’ between the race groups.

The history of Apartheid in South Africa is important in understanding intermarriages between African immigrants and South Africans because it heightened race and ethnical difference. According to Claassen (2017:1) South Africa now has the unfortunate reputation as one of the more hostile destinations in the world for African migrants due to widespread attacks that targeted foreigners. The attitudes and relations of South Africans with African migrants is important in understanding the environment in which intermarriages between these two groups are formed. It is unavoidable to discuss intermarriages without mentioning xenophobia. African immigrants in most cases are not welcomed in some communities in South Africa. A survey conducted found that almost half of the South African sample wanted foreign nationals, regardless of their legal status, to be deported (Southern African Migration Project, 2008) cited in Claassen (2017:2). These findings indicate that African immigrants are not met with favorable treatment and views. Understanding the apartheid history and the act of xenophobia enables an understanding about the implications that these two occurrences have on intermarriage.

### **1.4 Rationale for the study**

The rationale for this study is to document love relationships between African immigrants and South Africans. Most studies that are related to immigrants focus on their economic integration into the South African economy and the legal documentation permitting them to be in the country. It is very rare to conduct studies concerning their lives at a personal and familial perspective. Internationally there have been numerous studies addressing intermarriages between African immigrants and natives, however their findings cannot be used to generalize the experiences of

South African and African immigrants in intermarriages. The prevalence of Intermarriage in South Africa calls for an enquiry of intermarriage therefore the basis of this study is to gain an understanding of this intimate relationship and its social impact. Furthermore, it is important to gain an understanding of how these unions are perceived in South African societies.

### **1.5 Value of the study**

This study is context specific it gives an understanding of intermarriage in the South African perspective and the results obtained can be used in comparison to international studies documenting intermarriages. Intermarriages between South Africans and African immigrants reflects a growing prevalence of an African marriage system that shows an aspect of diversity within the country's households. This study is valuable in understanding intermarriage and its dynamics in using an insider perspective described by those who are in intermarriages and outsider perspective given by the public. It is also valuable in highlighting how the South African context in which they exist in impacts on them.

This study adds to previous research by focusing on the factors that are responsible for the formation of intermarriage and it clearly offers insight of the issue of intermarriage in different cultural and socio-economic setting than previously conducted studies of the West. Both the native and immigrant spouse offer their insight of how they experience intermarriage.

The study contributes to the scarce research that exists regarding intermarriages between South Africans and African immigrants and to a certain extent explain effect of intermarriages on the scope of social inclusion and division and assimilation of the migrant spouse. Although xenophobia is not the scope of the study intermarriages can help identify ethnic and cultural gaps between South Africans and African immigrants that do not facilitate cohesive living.

Finally, this study will give an understanding of intermarriage from a nonracial point unlike most studies done in South Africa pertaining to interracial marriage which specifically address racial differences of black and white intermarriages but no other variables.

## **1.6 Problem statement**

There is a growing number of marriages between South Africans and African immigrants, but little research has been conducted to gain an understanding of this occurrence. The formation of intermarriage between South African and African immigrants is under researched and there is a need to understand how couples navigate their married life and how the contextual factors impact on their marriages.

In society and media platforms these intermarriages are portrayed and received with skepticism yet there is no formal enquiry that sets to get an understanding of how and why they occur and what implications they have on households and family life in the country.

## **1.7 Main Aim of the study**

The point of departure of this study is the notion that the perceptions held by society regarding intermarriage in the case of this study South Africans married to African foreigners influences the experiences of those who are involved in these marriages. The study aims to understand the dynamics and perception of intermarriage between these two groups through the perspective of those who are in these marriages. It also aims to give an outsider perspective of how members of society receive and think of intermarriages between South Africans and African immigrants. Finally, it aims to see if intermarriages offer any degree of social inclusion or assimilation to the migrant spouse.

## **1.8 Objectives**

- To understand the dynamics and factors leading to intermarriages.
- To understand social reactions as perceived by intermarried couple.
- To investigate if intermarriage is and indicator of assimilation or inclusion of the migrant spouse in the South African context.
- To discover the challenges and benefits associated with intermarriages.
- To understand perceptions of intermarriage from the point of view of members in society.

## **1.9 Questions to be answered**

- What are the individual, social and structural determinants that lead to intermarriage marriage?
- How do Societal and family perceptions of intermarriage facilitate or hinder the success of intermarriage?
- Does intermarriage aid in integration or assimilation of the African foreign spouse to the host society?
- What are the challenges and benefits of intermarriage marriage?
- What adjustments have been made to accommodate each other in the marriage?
- How does the public perceive intermarriage?

## **1.10 Structure of Dissertation**

This dissertation consists of five chapters which describe the outline of the study, methods used, results and recommendations.

### **Chapter one**

In this chapter frequently used terms are defined. This chapter offers insight into the background of the study and states the rationale of the study. The research questions and objectives that this study aims to address are listed and the location in which the study takes place in is given.

### **Chapter two**

This chapter is made up of the literature review.it offers insight on pioneering and contemporary research pertaining to intermarriages in the global and South African context. In line with the studies questions and objectives this chapter provides literature that is relevant to the topic.

### **Chapter three**

The first chapter provides an outline of the theoretical and contextual framework that underpin this research study and the second part of this chapter details the methodology used to conduct this study. It basically explains how the study was executed and which instruments were used. It describes the research design, sampling method, and methods of data collection and analysis. It also accounts for the ethical consideration and trustworthiness of this study.

### **Chapter four**

This chapter introduces the reader to the couples who are participants in this study. It gives details and descriptions of who they are. The information is presented under the themes of socio-cultural backgrounds and dating histories.

### **Chapter five**

This chapter documents the finding of this study. It gives in details the lived experiences of intermarried couple, it also gives perceptions of intermarriages as narrated by the interviewed public. It makes use of direct quotations as extracted from participant interviews. The theoretical framework and literature are used to look for similarities and difference in the finding.

### **Chapter six**

This chapter makes up the final chapter of this study. Highlighting major themes and points it summarises the whole thesis. Based on the conclusions deduced from the study this chapter makes recommendations pertaining to intermarriages to the various stakeholders that are instrumental in these unions.

#### **1.11 Summary**

The above mentioned discussion indicates that there is a need to understand the many facets of intermarriages between South Africans and African migrants. In the beginning of the chapter the rationale and background of the study are discussed. A clear problem statement, objectives and research questions are listed. The value of the study is also discussed. Finally a brief account of the content is given for chapter one to chapter five.

## **Chapter two: Literature review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The following literature review starts off by exploring various literature on context specific intermarriage studies from different countries. It then examines how intermarriage is understood in South Africa. Due to the scarcity of research on the subjective experiences of intermarried couples in the South African context the study has provided findings from international studies that relate to intermarriage which can provide insight to this topic, furthermore this review of literature extends itself by using South African studies that investigated inter racial intermarriages of black and white couples. The review consists of a significant body of literature that explain the factors that lead to the formation of intermarriages and how these marriages respond in the environment in which they exist.

### **2.2 International history of intermarriage**

Marriage in general has been researched significantly because of the importance and meaning attached to it by people in various cultural contexts. Intermarriage has attracted numerous scholars across disciplines to investigate it as it has aspects that make it unique when compared to marriage between people of the same background. Pioneering studies on intermarriage were mostly focused on intermarriage from a racial perspective and employed the social exchange theory as a framework to make sense of it. The change of laws such as the immorality act which prevented black men and white women to be married in countries such as America were abolished it was evident that there was a need to investigate other dynamics of intermarried excluding race.

### **2.3 South African history of intermarriage**

In South Africa research on intermarriage has been observed through the lenses of race and legislation. This is due to the country's history of the Apartheid regime which enforced legislation that criminalized intermarriages. Marriage between historically defined race groups were prohibited by the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (Act No 55 of 1949) and the Immorality Act of 1950. Thompsell (2018) stated that the Act banned marriages between "Europeans and non-Europeans", which, in the language of the time, meant that white people could not marry people

of other races. The group areas act further created separation as people in different race groups were allocated distinct housing areas. These laws did not stop the occurrence of intermarriages even though there were serious consequences to intermarried couples. Following democratic transition, South Africa has seen an increase in the flow of migrants from neighboring African countries Modi (2003:1759). Migrants have settled in South Africa as the host country and have engaged in romantic relationships with South African men and women that led to intermarriage. Although this occurrence is not relatively new it is however more common to see and hear about love relationships that form between South Africans and African migrants.

#### **2.4 Reasons for the growing prevalence of intermarriage in the world**

According to the United States Population Reference Bureau (2005) the high rate of immigration across the world has an impact in the increasing prevalence of intermarriage. People are moving to different parts of the world for various reasons ranging from better economic pursuits, opportunity and studying abroad among other factors. Romano, (2001) states that the phenomenon of globalization allows for orthodox socially constructed restrictions to decline this facilitates the option for individuals to intermarry from different parts of the world. The dawn of democracy in South Africa has enabled people from other African countries to come and settle in in the country as refugees, economic migrants and others. This migration of people around the world presents to individual the opportunity to meet and form relationships that lead to marriage.

#### **2.5 Divorce and intermarriage**

‘Intermarriage can also be associated with social stigma and scepticism, so that divorce rates are higher for intermarriages’ Nottmeyer (2015:5). This finding is supported by some studies namely Heaton (2002) & Kalmijn et al. (2005) that state intermarriages are most likely to end in divorce. Like in any marriage intermarried couples are bound to have conflict. The way the couple resolve their conflict will determine their satisfaction in the marriage and motivation to remain in it. Kalmijn et al. (2005:7) intermarried couples are said to divorce because of dissimilar characteristics, cultural and religious differences amongst other reasons and are highly impacted by external factors such as stigma. Kalmijn et al. (2005:7) states that although lack of social support does not necessarily lead to dissolution of the marriage it does have an influence when the intermarried couple is facing difficulty in their marriage. Although I grant that intermarried couples divorce because of their dissimilar characteristics I maintain that it is very important to

acknowledge other factors that lead intermarried to divorce that are not related to their difference in nationality, ethnicity, culture and religion. Divorce is high even in marriages of people who share the same background therefore cultural and religious differences in intermarried couples may be exacerbating already pre-existing conflicts that are not based on the couples cultural differences.

## **2.6 Variables that influence intermarriage**

### **2.6.1 Intermarriage and gender**

Gender is one of the variables that have been explored in relation to intermarriage patterns. Rodríguez-García (2007) indicated that men tend to marry exogamously in comparison to women because generally in society there is a predominant patriarchal social order. (Lee and Edmonston, 2005) state that the result of studies based on Asian American intermarriage indicated that women were more likely to intermarry in comparison to men. (Mullings, 1994) cited by Lee and Edmonston (2007:8) suggested that this may be attributed to how North American/Western culture depicts Asian women using qualities that make them desirable to males belonging to other cultures. Khoo (2011) states that in countries where females are considered assets they tend to not intermarry whilst males are given freedom to potentially intermarry. It is further stated that “This gender differential reflects cultural norms in East Asian societies in relation to women’s and men’s roles and status, namely that women leave the family when they marry whereas men are expected to remain in the family to carry on the lineage so it is more important that they marry women of the same ethnic background” Khoo (2011).

### **2.6.2 Age at migration, duration of stay in host country and generation status as variables of intermarriage**

It is said that the likelihood of intermarriage is also influenced by the duration in time which the immigrant has lived in a particular host country Chiswick & Houseworth (2011) .Those who have lived in a country for a long period of time and those who immigrated earlier stage in their lives tend to intermarry. Chiswick & Houseworth (2011) say the rationale for this is that it requires a significant amount of time for immigrants to adapt and familiarise themselves with the lifestyle, values, customs and norms of the natives in the host country, furthermore, the immigrants also require to gain the ability to communicate effectively using the local language(s).Another observation that was made is that there is a considerable difference in probability to intermarry between first generation immigrants and second generation, with second generation immigrants

more likely to intermarry Gurak, & Fitzpatrick (1982). It has been noted that there are differences among immigrant generations. It was more probable that second generation immigrants to intermarry in comparison to first generation migrants. Successive generations are highly likely to intermarry Kalmijn (1993).

## **2.7 Procurement of citizenship and intermarriage**

When immigrants gain citizenship of a host country there is an impact on the likelihood of intermarriage to occur as this affects intermarriage in both positive and negative ways. Azzolini and Guetto (2017:1302) state that citizenship offers immigrants better job prospect and opportunities which lead to stability and being able to enter into better labor markets with higher pay. Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul (2008) noted that acquiring citizenship has an impact on immigrants by offering them a sense of belonging to the host country, this in turn increases the probability of interaction between the immigrants and natives. Status exchange and the theory of assimilation are featured in discussions regarding intermarriage and procurement of citizenship. The theory of assimilation posits that there are reduced boundaries between these two groups therefore the gaining of citizenship can increase the rate of intermarriage because there is better opportunity to interact with natives in settings such as the work place. The ability to attain better employment provided by acquired citizenship makes migrants to be more appealing to natives because of their financial prospects. On another perspective Azzolini and Guetto (2017:1303) mention that immigrants may see it as beneficial to obtain citizenship through intermarriage with native. Azzolini and Guetto (2017:1303) further say “If a status exchange mechanism prevails, an exogenous positive shift in immigrants’ legal status would eliminate part of their rationale for the exchange and thus reduce intermarriage propensity”. Basically getting citizenship of the host country can help foster interaction and relationships between natives and immigrants thus increasing intermarriage. In contrast if the social exchange theory is to be applied after having acquired citizenship migrants may not view natives as marriage partners as there would be no incentive to intermarry.

## **2.8 Changing marriage patterns.**

In the midst of intermarriage between South Africans and African immigrants there have been changing marriage patterns within the native South African population. Numerous research studies concluded that there has a decrease in marriage amongst women (Amoateng, 2007; Palamuleni, 2010). There has been a sharp decrease in marriage among black South Africans and they were found to stay single Amoateng (2007). “Cohabitation is one explanation put forward for the changes in marital rates, either as part of marital postponement or as an alternative form of coupling, or both (Bumpass, et al., 1991; Hosegood et al., 2009)” as cited by Moore & Govender, (2013:624). In black South African cultures bride wealth is required before getting married and majority of men cannot afford it so cohabitating becomes an alternative to marriage. In South Africa being married to African migrants is growing although it is not document in literature but it is a common site in society.

At its core marriage in Africa was used to strengthen kinship ties and form new networks. Migration of African migrants impacts marriage patterns both in their home countries and South Africa. Usually men migrate at higher rates than females although there are instances where they migrate to South Africa with their wives. Some African migrants who settle in South become part of the dating pool or marriage market. If migrant men intermarry at a high number it is most likely that this will cause a decline of available men to marry in their countries of origin. Implications of intermarriage include language and transmission of culture. In the case of language usually spouses do not speak the same indigenous language and they settle on communicating using English, this is not to say they cannot learn each other’s language it is just that this will take effort and willingness to learn. Cultural transmission is also impacted in intermarriages because partners are not from the same country and do not share the same culture, when married and living together they will have negotiations which might end in compromising and accommodating the spouse’s culture and way of life.

## **2.9 Determining factors of intermarriage.**

Understanding intermarriage entails accessing the determining factors that lead to people to marry outside their group. Various scholars, (Kalmijn 1998, (van Poppel, Liefbroer, Vermunt, & Smeenk, 2001, Dumănescu, Mârza and Eppel 2004) have stated that these reasons range from being at a personal level to being influenced externally by the context in which the personal level to being influenced externally by the context in which they occur. It has been hypothesized that individuals who are not married seek possible partners based on desired cultural, social and economic factors.

Dumănescu, Mârza and Eppel (2004:3) in their book about the history of intermarriage state that these factors include but not limited to individual preferences, marriage markets and external factors such as the church and family. Kalmijn (1998:397) also states that spouse selection and intermarriage is based on preference and opportunity and third parties. Preferring certain characteristics when deciding to intermarry has been understood and interpreted as individuals wanting to reach a higher social status Kalmijn (1998:397).

### **2.9.1 Individual preference**

Kalmijn (1998) states that socioeconomic resources and cultural resources are influential in spouse selection. He defines socioeconomic resources as “resources that produce economic well-being and status” Kalmijn (1998:399). It is said that individuals look for characteristics that are desirable to them when selecting a partner. He further states that cultural resources are based on marrying a spouse who is similar to you and shares similar world view and values Kalmijn (1998). External and societal factors have been listed in literature as motivators of intermarriage, however Char (1977) in his research about intermarriages in Hawaii emphasized the importance of acknowledging individual stimuli that lead to intermarriage. He puts these reasons in categories of “healthy and unhealthy”. He further names these motives as love, enhancing social status, unsubstantiated beliefs about another group, wanting to be unique, encouragement from parents and proximity Char (1977:33).

## 2.9.2 Interaction and marriage market

Kalmijn (1998:396) “Intermarriage can thus be regarded as an intimate link between social groups”. He further states that “marriage patterns simply tells us which groups interact with whom” Kalmijn (1998:397). The “matrimonial market” provides opportunities for encountering members of other groups and socializing with them: it has been shown in the literature that when members of different groups have the opportunity to interact regularly, this increases the chances of their entering mixed marriages. Dumănescu, Mârza and Eppel (2004:3). In South Africa black African immigrants do interact with South Africans because some of their businesses are township based and also there are African immigrants who are also sharing living spaces with South Africans in townships. So, the two groups have an opportunity to meet and interact. Opportunity to meet between these two groups is often facilitated by sharing residential area, schools and universities and sometimes churches where common faith is shared.

In the South African context when discussing marriage markets it is important to give consideration to the cultural process of ilobolo (bride price) whereby the groom gives gifts, money or cattle as a token of appreciation to the brides’ family. The importance of the bride price is based on the premise is that to a certain extent it determines which men are in the position to marry, this affects the marriage market as it distinguishes those who can afford to get married and those who cannot afford to. In South Africa many cultures view bride price as a significant stage that solidifies and seals the marriage commitment.

In their paper that seeks to investigate the relationship between marriage and the availability of suitable or marriageable partners among African and white women in South Africa Posel Casale (2009) came to a conclusion based on their finding that it is reasonable therefore that low marriage rates among African women reflect not so much a shortage of available (unmarried) African men, but a shortage of “marriageable” men. Posel Casale (2009:1). This is attributed to the fact that among black African men that is high unemployment rate and relatively low income which prevents them from being able to pay the bride price Posel Casale(2009:9). Posel and Stephanie (2011:6) state that “ilobolo has become more difficult to pay, related to a growing commercialization and individualization of the practice”. In contemporary South Africa ilobolo has moved away from only big about thanksgiving, uniting and solidifying relationships between

two families but it is also viewed as an opportunity to make financial gain through the large sum of money and cattle required.

### **2.9.3 Other factors that lead to intermarriages**

There are negative connotations associated with people who have opted for intermarriage they are inclined to be viewed as rebellious, lack confidence and dignity Duong (1999). Sung (1990) agrees with this statement as he pointed out that individuals who partakes in intermarriage are prone to be peculiar, disobedient, and are divorced individuals taking on a second marriage, but also better at making compromises and manage differences caused by culture. An opposing view of the latter typecast statements is the one mentioned by Gaines (1995) stating that partners in intermarriages have a positive repute about themselves and their partners. The cited literature shows that there is no one universal motivating factor that lead people to intermarry however mostly in literature (Kalmijn 1998, Fu and Heaton (2000) cite socioeconomic factors and exchange theory as influencing the likelihood of intermarriage. This finding proves to be true as it is included in many literature reviews pertaining to studies inquiring about intermarriage in various contexts. I put it forward that love is also a major driving force behind the formation of intermarriages however it does not feature often in studies as a factor that contributes to intermarriages.

### **2.9.4 Education and the probability of intermarriage**

Education is one of the frequently featured influence when discussing the occurrence of intermarriage. Kalmijn (1998:) says that numerous studies have concluded that highly educated members of ethnic or racial minority groups marry exogamously in comparison to their lesser-educated peers. Furtado & Theodoropoulos (2007:5) support this claim that highly educated individuals are tend to marry exogamously for three reasons. These reasons are namely cultural adaptability, enclave effect and by the assortative matching effect. They state that educated people may be more flexible and better adjusted to different customs and cultures this leads to their likelihood to being intermarried more probable. Furtado & Theodoropoulos (2007) further more they state that educated people are more likely to reside away from ethnic enclaves and individuals who value similarities in both ethnicity and education may then be prepared to similarities in

education for ethnicity when assessing potential spouse. Education therefore widens the choice in spouses and facilitates the formation of intermarriage.

## **2.10 Consequences of intermarriage**

Intermarriage have many outcomes for the couples and the societies in which they live in. In literature there is a consensus among scholars that intermarriage has positive economic benefits for the migrant spouse. Nottmeyer (2015:1) states that “intermarriages between immigrants and natives (intermarriages) are often associated with economic success and interpreted as an indicator of social integration”. She further states that men who are intermarried are usually better educated and have better employment opportunities as compared to other immigrant men who are not intermarried. Having a native as a spouse in some contexts proves to be beneficial because the native spouse has social networks and understanding of the host country. “However, intermarriage may not be the a leading influence of financial and economic prosperity but alternatively be its consequence, as improved education and personal features could be both economically beneficial and increase the likelihood of meeting native partner” Nottmeyer (2015) .

### **2.10.1 Social reactions**

Social reactions towards intermarriage are a major influencer on how couples experience their marriage. A new Pew Research Center survey finds that roughly four-in-ten adults (39%) now say that more people of different races marrying each other is good for society – up significantly from 24% in 2010. The share saying this trend is a bad thing for society is down slightly over the same period, from 13% to 9%. Pew (2017:24). In this study social acceptance of intermarriage varied according to age whereby the younger age group was more accepting of intermarriage and perceived them as good for society. The older age groups of 60 and above were found to be less accepting of intermarriages. Sullivan and Cottone (2006) Societal attitudes range from the curiosity to prejudice of the society. Members of society do not always base their attitudes on intermarriage on fact but rather on unfounded stereotypes.

### **2.10.2 Challenges faced by intermarried couples**

All couples at some point in their marriage encounter challenges. In surveyed literature (Hohmann-Marriott and Amato 2008). There was a consensus among authors that intermarriage is depicted

as an institution that is characterized by a significant amount of challenges that lead to it being short-lived. It said that intermarried couples may experience more exacerbated challenges than those that married within their group. Wang et. al. (2012) state that these relationships depict low marital satisfaction and stability. After searching research pertaining to challenges and ways of resolving conflict that intermarried couple encounter it was evident that most studies were from a clinical background and to some extent were subjective. Intermarried couples were said be more problematic than the norm which is getting married within ones' group. (Bratter & King, 2008) stated that the negative reactions from people and lack social support from family and friends usually counts as a challenge to intermarried couples

There are normative and cultural challenges that intermarried couples face as categorized by Donovan (2004). Examples of normative challenges are gender differences, parenting, adapting to marriage and examples of cultural challenges are namely disapproval for society, cultural norms ad way of life, discontentment and lack of family support etc. Among other challenges Romano (1988) cited in Donovan (2004) stated that “values, food and drink, sex, male-female roles, time, place of residence, politics, friends, finances, in-laws, social class, religion, raising children, language/ communication, dealing with stress” are some of the challenges faced by intermarried couples. Literature shows that cultural differences also present intermarried couples with challenges this is evident in a study done by Jabar (2006) on Filipino wives married foreign husbands was said that these differences affected how couple experienced conflict and discontent in their marriages.

Two aspects in literature pertaining to challenges face by intermarried couples was noted:

- 1) The challenges identified as being prevalent in intermarriage were from outsider perspectives, there is scarcity of literature discussing challenges as perceived by the intermarried couples.
- 2) Yes, there are challenges that are a result of being in an intermarriage but most of the cited challenges are not unique or exclusive to intermarried couples but are also prevalent among couple who married within their group.

To gain an understanding of the challenges experienced by intermarried couples it is best to conduct studies that will allow for couples in these marriages to give accounts about their marriage life and probe what they deem to be challenges and stressors. It will enrich existing literature to

also compare and contrast challenges from intermarried couples from different context to avoid make generalization about difficulties faced by intermarried as the context in which these marriages take place might be an influential factor that creates or contributes to challenges.

### **2.10.3 Rewards of being in an intermarriage**

Marry someone from another social group, culture or nationality can present challenges it can also bring about positive aspects and benefits. Many studies on intermarriages usually put emphasis on the challenges that are encountered by intermarried couples and the negative impact experienced at an individual level of family. Usually these marriages are characterized by turmoil, dissatisfaction and conflict. Couples have described some of the benefits they experience as a result of being intermarried as being tolerant to people from other cultures, experiencing two cultures learning new languages amongst many other benefits

Increased sense of uniqueness, having the ability to bridge cultures and enjoy the best of both worlds, and being more open-minded, welcoming and sensitive to other people. Results from our study also identified numerous benefits from cross-national marriages, such as openness and acceptance towards other cultures, (27) given use of partner resources and easier access to local networks, being married to a native leads to a faster social, cultural, and economic integration (e.g., Dribe & Lundh 2008; Nystedt & Dribe 2015)

## **2.11 Third party influences**

### **2.11.1 The state**

The state plays an important role in creating laws and legislation that govern intermarriage. Dodson (2001:74) states that upon marriage to a South African citizen the migrant spouse does not automatically receive or qualify for permanent residence in the country. Dodson (2001:74) further states that “their immigration status is instead determined by the Immigrants Selection Board”. Dodson (2001:75) is of the belief that under the guise of regulation and policy the South African legislation is driven by the motivation to expose “fake” marriages, it is inferred that the marriages are entered into to gain entry in the country and that there is no positive rights attached to

immigrant /foreign spouses of South African citizens. (Crush 2000; Landau 2011; Peberdy 2001) cited in (2001:76).

Various scholar echoed the same sentiments as Dodson, this is evident in (Landau 2005; Morris and Bouillon 2001) cited in Pineteh (2014) when he writes that “government preoccupies itself not only with finding sustainable solutions for pathologies such as poverty, crime, and social violence but also with formulating succinct laws to regularise and curb the upsurge of African migrants”. Huddleston et al. (2015) cited in Azzolini & Guetto (2017:1307) also shares insight about the effects of laws in Italy by stating that immigrants in the country are hindered in integrating socioeconomically because there is stringent eligibility criteria and long procedure for naturalization whereby on minimum the immigrants need ten years of uninterrupted residence for non-European migrants. The reviewed literature suggests that the state and its laws impact on intermarriage, although bans on intermarriage have been long lifted immigrants and immigrants who are intermarried face a new burden of going through laws in try bureaucratic procedures to acquire permits and citizenship.

In addition, the South African department of Home Affairs in known to be continuously putting in place strict policies governing immigrant to acquire documents permitting them to be and stay in South Africa but not ensuring that those who are not in “fraudulent” marriages get the documentation without frustration, Dodson (2001).

### **2.11.2 Church and Religion.**

In the survey research the religion and the church were themes that emerged as having an influence on partner choice and selection. Although this study does not aim to research interfaith marriages it was evident that even though all the participants were identified with Christianity as a religion they, did not come from the same church or denomination. Ansell (2001) cited in Chimunhu &Mataruse (2014:59) suggest that “viewing of Christianity as a single, coherent, and undivided entity is erroneous”. They further present the idea that hatred between fellow Christians can be strong and cause division resulting in no unity and harmony among different denominations in Christianity and that courtship and marriage are also impacted by intra-Christian conflict.

Niehuis et al. (2006) posits that “whereas we consider race, ethnicity, and religious orientation to be individual factors that partners bring into the relationship, we also consider them to be

contextual factors impinging from the outside and bringing meaning to the individuals and their relationship,” Niehuis, Huston, & Rosenband, (2006: 32). With this being said it is important to see how the difference in denomination and church impacts the intermarried couples. The church and Christian doctrine play a role in the formation of individual values and also present expectations governing Christian marriages, it is therefore important to include these institutions in literature pertaining to intermarriage. Crohn (1998) cited in Campbell et al (2012:859) states that “Religious groups are a good example of how communities can serve as relationship gatekeepers. They help families define their social group identity and influence how individuals perceive intercultural relationships”. The views and the teachings of the church can either help facilitate or hinder intermarriages

### **2.11.3 Family**

The union of two people in marriage involves more than just the couple. Families are an important part of the wedding and the marriage. Individuals are to a certain extent influenced by their families in selecting a spouse. Dumănescu, Mârza and Eppel (2004:4) states that family influence on partner selection is not a written law however, it is applied using verbal suggestions and threatening exclusion should a media decides to marry someone outside of the family preference. There is a consensus among scholars who have written about intermarriage that the family exerts pressure on intermarried people. Family opinions about marriage and choice of spouse matter to individuals in most cases. Straying from the norm of intermarrying can lead to unpleasant consequences to the couple and the spouse that has intermarried. Yet, research has shown that approval from family and friends predicts partners ‘relationship satisfaction, and that couples both credit and blame members of the social network for changes in commitment, both before and after marriage (Hill & Peplau; Surra et al.; Whyte) cited in Niehuis, S., Huston, T. L., & Rosenband, R. (2006:30)

### **2.11.4 Influence of media in portraying immigrants and intermarriage in South Africa**

Media reports are influential in informing the public about current events. This platform is powerful in impacting how people understand the world around them. It helps people create opinions and viewpoint about issues. In South Africa media reports regarding African immigrants are usually negative. They are based on the legal status of immigrants, fraudulently acquiring citizenship, manufacturing and distribution of drugs, competitors in the job and economic market etc. Media reports of these allegations impact the way that African migrants are received in society

irrespective of being true or not. A study by Atanda (2011) states that that media and political leaders are major influencers of discrimination against immigrants and aid to spread anti-immigrant prejudice. It is evident that intermarriages between South African and African immigrants are questionable to society both morally and legally. Describing African immigrants only in a negative way creates a barrier of interaction as they are treated with suspicion. This can therefore impact on the occurrences of love relationships between these two groups and affect the intermarriages that already exist.

## **2.12 Theories that explain intermarriage**

### **2.12.1 Social exchange**

This hypothesis argues that in the eyes of the native population, there is a prestige hierarchy of social groups, with the native majority perceived as higher than the various immigrant groups. The reasons for these perceptions may lie in prejudices against ethnic minorities, xenophobia, racist beliefs, and ethnocentrism. Given that such perceptions indeed exist, it can be expected that native persons are more likely to marry an immigrant when they gain in socioeconomic status. In this case, the lower perceived prestige of being an immigrant is compensated by a higher socioeconomic status.

The status exchange hypothesis is believed to apply mostly to marriages in which the husband is an immigrant and the wife is native born. The reason for this is that most marriages have a traditional division of labor, which means that men's socioeconomic resources are more important for the couple than women's socioeconomic resources. Hence, a trade-off between higher socioeconomic resources on the part of the wife and a high native prestige on the part of the husband is less attractive. This may be an additional reason for why in most group's immigrant men are more likely to marry exogamously than immigrant women. Exchange theory postulates that potential partners are evaluated in terms of resources they can offer and can offer in return. Potgieter (2017:2).

Most studies state that there is a social exchange in couples who are intermarried, for example in black-white marriage whereby the black spouse is said to attain an elevated social status by marrying a white partner. Another example of mostly cited assumed social exchange is in the case of one partner being highly educated intermarried to a partner with a lower education background. Contrary to the stated examples of social exchange in intermarriage Fu (2008) offers a new

perspective by saying that there are other examples of social exchange other than education such as income of the partner and the stature of their job.

In South Africa in a study conducted by Sanger (2009) in Du Noon, the results showed that there is a level of transaction of resources that takes in the relationships between South African women and “foreigners”. It is stated that male African migrants take advantage of the women’s desires to have money in exchange of feeling secured. Respondents in this study were quoted saying:

*“To know the country, I have to get a woman here, to become a citizen for security, protection and guidance. Local women protected our stuff while we left during xenophobia”.* Sanger (2009)

This response indicates that some relationships between African migrants and South Africans are formed on the bases of securing certain benefits that are brought in by the partner as resources. Usually the social exchange theory refers to these benefits as tangible material, social transaction and status but I argue that it falls short on considering elements such as love, time and joy that contribute to making the marriage work and be satisfactory. It further assumes that the benefits or resources in the marriage are meant just for the individual as a reward but it is possible for example a couple to invest time into their marriage not for individual gain but for the maintenance and nurturing of their marriage.

Tafira (2014:163) reported that some romantic relationships shared by immigrant men and South African women are perceived as based on material transaction, whereby the immigrant man provides financially food the needs of the woman. Mainly caring for her children, buying food amongst other things whilst she performs wifely duties for him. “Most South African men are unemployed, and the poverty in the township leads women to look for better “opportunities” by finding men who can provide for their needs and wants” Tafira (2014:163). This provision done by the immigrant men makes them to be a preferred partner.

“Another explanation for exchange marriage is that different traits are valued in male and female partners because of gendered roles in family and work lives” (Buss and Barnes 1986) cited in Schwartz, Zeng, and Xie (2016:1007). This exchange of traits enables individuals to select partner with desired and most valued traits and qualities. In South Africa male African migrants are known to have an exceptional work ethic and are known to be good financial providers to their families

so an individual who values these traits can consider getting into a relationship with an individual who possess these qualities.

### **2.12.2 Assimilation and integration**

Gordon's theory of assimilation is cited in numerous studies which examine the impact of intermarriage in integration of immigrants into mainstream culture. In his theory he states that assimilation takes place at a structural, cultural and marital level. Song (2009:339) defines cultural assimilation or acculturation as a "change of cultural patterns to those of the host society, structural assimilation as large-scale entrance into the cliques, clubs and institutions of the host society, on a primary group level and marital assimilation as large-scale intermarriage". Song (2009:343) says that the connection between intermarriage and integration is questionable and intricate than many researchers suggested. He believes that migrants could move up and be economically integrated without necessarily being culturally assimilated to the mainstream group. This suggests that there might be interaction in the work space and business transaction but these opportunities to mingle do not result to relationships that can lead to intermarriage. He further state that yes, intermarriages do indicate that boundaries are declining in certain groups.

Songs' (2009) understanding of intermarriage is amongst the contemporary views of this theory in relation to intermarriage which emerged as a counter understanding of the assimilation theory as explained by Gordon.

In various studies (Alba and Nee 2003; Kalmijn 1998; Qian and Lichter 2007) intermarriage has been considered as a major determinant in assessing relations of people who differ culturally or ethnically. Kalmijn and Van Tubergen (2010) state that intermarriage is a pointer that indicates how differing groups of people view each other as equals in the societies they live in. The mixing of different people through marriage is perceived as being a facilitator of integration for the migrant who marries a South African spouse. When these two individuals decide to marry they create a greater scope of interaction because marriage entails for their families and communities to interact. Kalmijn and Van Tubergen (2010) state that their union connects the social networks to which the spouses belong to.

### **2.13 Factors that aid in the success of intermarriage**

There is no magic potion to make a marriage work. In other words, what works for a couple may not work for another couple. The literature offers various solutions to overcome the challenges that interracial couples face. Four different types of models are common in meeting these challenges: submission (one partner submits to the culture of the other), compromise (each partner gives up certain aspects of his or her culture), obliteration (both try to erase their differences), and consensus which is presented as the most effective, though rarely used—it is a give and take on the part of both partners (Romano, 2008). Intermarried couples are faced with many challenges, in order for the marriage to remain satisfactory they need to be able to negotiate challenges that stem from within their marriage and challenges that are as a result of their environment and third party.

### **2.14 Cultural differences**

According to Takano (2002), 19% of marital conflicts in intercultural couples is due to cultural differences. Cultural differences occur when intercultural couples fail to reach a compromise in terms of their cultural differences and similarities. When these couples enter a marriage, they make a transition which permits them to amend their cultural values and belief system, therefore Cultural differences usually include disparities in language and communication, cultural stereotypes, perspectives of financial handling, as well as child rearing and parenting style. To maintain a healthy intercultural relationship, it seems to be highly beneficial if couples share a strong sense of intimacy and mutual understanding of each other. A particular culture also influences a person's values, which are an individual's belief of systems and behavior, determining whether a matter is considered right or wrong, and if it is an important issue or not. Being culturally derived, intercultural couples may often have differences in their values, which can cause conflict in their relationships.

## **Chapter3: Theoretical and Methodological Approach**

### **3.1 Theoretical/conceptual frameworks**

According to Miles and Huberman (1994:440), a conceptual framework “lays out the key factors, constructs, or variables, and presumes relationships among them”. Basically, it helps to locate the research conducted within a particular frame of reference and helps in interpreting data of a study. Below are the chosen theoretical frameworks for this study will be explained in detail, the rationale for the choice of framework and how they will be used to interpret data of this study will be discussed.

#### **3.1.1 Ecological systems theory**

The ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner (1979) offers a way to understand how contextual aspects in a couples’ environment can influence and affect intermarriage. In this study it showed how the opinions of friends, families, religious groups and community members impacted on how couples experienced their marriage. This theory suggest that there are internal and external impact on how intermarried couples navigate their relationship. The ecological systems theory describes how each environmental system, affects the development and maintenance of intermarriages.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) posits that a person interacts with various systems in the environment and that these systems can be influential in partner choice and the formation and maintenance of intermarriages. Silva, Campbell and Wright (2012) state that “the person refers to biological and psychological characteristics of the individual, and the environment refers to physical, social, cultural, and historical contexts in which humans live”. These systems are represented as concentric circles.

Silva, Campbell and Wright (2012:858) identify the smallest circle as the micro system signifies the person and social structures in which he or she participates directly. They state that there is a microsystem which signifies the person or individual and the social structures that she participates in directly. These structures are namely the family, school, work or church, she participates directly, such as the family, school, work, or church. “The interaction between these various

structures of the microsystem is called the mesosystem” Silva, Campbell and Wright (2012:858). In the context of intermarriage you will find that in the mesosystems that is where these relations interact with each other and is influential in the individual and couples choice to intermarry. The couple’s marriage is subjected to either the positive or negative influence from family, friends or colleagues. The larger circle enveloping the microsystem is the exosystem. In The exosystem the individual does not directly participate in it. It represents the local and regional communities in which the person does not participate directly but that still influence his or her behavior Silva, Campbell and Wright (2012:858). Some examples of the stakeholders in the exosystem are parents’ workplace, neighborhoods’ structures of social or legal authority etc. It shows the secondary effect of people or events outside a person’s immediate environment. Skowroński, A. Othman, D. Tan Wen Siang, G. Lum Wei Han, J. Wong Jia Yang, K. Waszyńska (2014:347) state that the indirect influential factors in the exosystem include, among other factors, “the number of divorced family friends or neighbors in one’s surroundings, the glamorization of sexual promiscuity, infidelity, divorce, homosexuality, and cohabitation in the media”. They list macrosystem as the largest circle. It represents the influence of society at large with its customs, values and laws.

Basically, the macrosystem outlines and establishes the institutional way of living for the people in society. It is inclusive of economic, cultural and political influences and factors on intermarriage. Silva, Campbell and Wright (2012:858) refer to the chronosystem as a system that can be visually represented as a line cutting across the concentric circles and refers to the influence of time on developmental outcomes. They further state that this system is inclusive of how a person’s environment and characteristics change overtime.

The ecological systems theory was suitable for this study because it helped in understanding the influential factors that contribute to the formation of intermarriages between South Africans and African immigrants. The nature of this theory is holistic therefore, in the case of studying intermarriage it helped identify individual factors that lead someone to want to be intermarried instead of the norm of marrying within ones’ group. It further aided in identifying the influences that hindered or facilitated the relationship system (intermarriage). The intermarried couple is nested within its context and environment, using the ecological systems theory enabled me to observe how the interaction between the couple and environment impacts on their marriage. This

theory posits that all ecological systems are influential in the formation and maintenance of intermarriage relations and that if we are to fully understand these relationships we must be aware of how all these systems that come into contact with the couple are interlinked and therefore, cannot be looked at independently.

The ecosystems theory was relevant to this study because it highlighted how the various levels in the environment affect intermarriages. This can be explained as for example, the way a person was raised and the type of family they come from influences their choice in a marriage partner. Relationships of the individual such as family and friends also impact by facilitating or hindering intermarriage. Institutions such as church, cultural practices, law and legislation were seen to a certain extent to govern how couples in this study experienced and navigated being intermarried. This theory gave a clear picture that intermarriage is not only influenced and between individual couples, but it is a union that is highly influenced by the environment in which it takes place.

### **3.1.2 The social exchange theory**

“Social exchange theory portends that individuals in relationships are motivated by the goodness of outcomes they are expected to bring” (Blau, 1964; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959) cited in Nakonezny & Denton (2008:404). The whole premise of the social exchange theory is based on perceived cost and reward. Becker (1974) states that an individual chooses a partner once he/she has made an assessment of the cost and benefits of marrying the chosen person. Davis (1941) and Merton (1941) propose that mixed marriages are mainly based on concrete exchanges, such as socioeconomic condition, rather than immaterial effects.

Hammond & Cheney (2010) state that “outcomes are those rewards or costs which are received or incurred by actors from each other in an exchange relationship, outcomes can be positive(rewards) or negative (costs) and the theory makes no assumption about whether an individual will view a particular outcome as positive or negative”.

Using this theory helped in explaining what the intermarried couples perceived as the rewards and costs of being in an intermarriage, furthermore this theory highlighted non material gains of intermarriage which was unconventional in surveyed literature as most gains were cited as being of monetary value and upward social mobility.

### **3.1.3 Theory of assimilation**

The theory of assimilation posits that when immigrants settle in a host country over years they begin to assimilate to the native group. Milton Gordon (1964) is one of the pioneering works that seek to link the role of intermarriage in facilitating assimilation of migrants to the native group. This theory suggests that intermarriage can be used both as an indicator of assimilation and as a facilitator of assimilation. Park and Burgess (1921) suggest that assimilation entails the fusion of persons or groups where they acquire the attitudes of the host society, resulting in a common lifestyle for all. Theory of assimilation hypothesizes that assimilation takes place when immigrant and native groups interact with each other and there is openness in society whereby barriers are broken thus facilitating intermarriage.

This theory was relevant to the study because it helped to answer if African immigrants perceived themselves as being integrated to the South African mainstream society because of being intermarried as previous studies have alluded that immigrants assimilate cultural norms and language of natives. When immigrants are considered as part of the natives or hosts and do not face discrimination based on their ethnicity or heritage it can be said they have assimilated. This theory was able to probe to which extent or degree assimilation occurred whereby there is a high prevalence of xenophobia directed towards immigrants like in the South African context. Using the assimilation theory to frame the study on intermarriages enabled this study to uncover how the current socioeconomic scene of South Africa is a barrier to the assimilation of the African migrant spouses.

### **3.2 Introduction**

Research methodology covers the whole research process. It is basically the blueprint for conducting the research. In this chapter the research methodology used for conducting this study is described. Various methods of data collection techniques are discussed, furthermore the geographical area where the study was conducted is discussed, the study design and the population and sample are described. This chapter will also address methods which processed and validated the data collected as well as ethical issues which were considered when conducting the study. Within this chapter study limitations are also presented.

### **3.3 Research Paradigm and design.**

A qualitative research approach was followed in this study. Fossey et al (2002:717) state that, "qualitative research is a broad umbrella term for research methodologies that explore, describe and explain persons' experiences, behaviors, interactions and social contexts without the use of statistical procedures or quantification." Green and Thorogood (2009:5, 38) explain that the purpose of a study will (among other factors) control whether a researcher should use the qualitative approach as the main or sole research approach. The aim of the study is to understand the viewpoints of intermarried couples and discover their experiences of being intermarried, therefore this impartial paradigm is suitable for this study. It was necessary to employ the qualitative research paradigm because the study also aims to understand the intermarriage as perceived by the public. Qualitative research is holistic in nature Creswell (2003:179). This means that various perspectives about intermarriage are documented, factors involved and influential to intermarriage are identified. This all-inclusive process leads to outlining the core themes that emerge.

Within the qualitative approach, I employ a phenomenological strategy of inquiry. Phenomenology, according to Crabtree and Miller (1999:25), "seeks to understand the lived experience of individuals and their intentions within their 'life world'. It is the search for substance. It helped to pose the question of what it is like (experience) to be in an intermarriage. Creswell (2003) defines phenomenological study as "describing the meaning for several individuals of their lived

experiences of a concept or a phenomenon. This method of enquiry enabled me to understand intermarriage and the meaning attached to it through the insight of the couples who were interviewed. Also, it helped me understand the various perceptions held by members of society regarding intermarriage.

This research focuses on couples who have experienced the phenomenon of intermarriage marriage in the South African context and encompasses an effort to describe the essence of this experience and to draw certain conclusions about it. The account of the lived experience embraces equally “what” the couples have experienced and “how” they have experienced it.

I also applied an explorative research design. Neuman (1997:17) articulates that the explorative mode of inquiry is used to explore a new topic or learn more about issues where little is known. Research pertaining to marriages between African immigrants and South Africans is scarce specifically that gives insider perspective of this phenomenon.

### **3.4 Methods of data collection**

#### **3.4.1 Primary data collection**

Five couples were interviewed for the purposes of collecting data for this study. In total ten interviews were conducted between February and May 2018. Three of the interviews were conducted face to face in the participants' home. Two of the participants requested that their interviews be conducted in a public space. Some of the participants shared their experiences of being in intermarriages through written responses of the interview questions. Five participants were female and the five were males. Four females were South Africans and one male was South African. Five participants were from African countries namely Nigeria, Congo (DRC) and Zimbabwe. Zulu and English were the languages used to conduct interviews as preferred by the participants. The couples were asked to write a brief description of themselves addressing questions like age, occupation, number of years they have been married and place where they met. This was done to gain an understanding of the couple.

*Table 1: Demographic information of the primary participants (intermarried couples).*

Pseudonym of couples	Sex	Age	Ethnicity	Country of origin	Education level/occupation	Number of years married
John Cathy	Male Female	35 28	Zulu Shona	SA Zimbabwe	Engineer Daycare owner	3
Ross Rachel	Male Female	31 29	Igbo Xhosa	Nigeria SA	Business(shop) Fashion designer	3
Sheldon Amy	Male Female	39 36	Igbo Zulu	Nigeria SA	Salon owner teacher	6
Marshal Lilly	Male Female	29 24	Shona Zulu	Zimbabwe SA	Artisan Masters student	2
Lenard Penny	Male Female	41 33	Luba Zulu	Congo Drc SA	Engineer Graphic designer	7

### **3.4.2 Secondary data**

To enrich the data of this study it was necessary to include the views of people who were not in intermarriages to gain an understanding of how they perceive intermarriage. In June 2018 six people were interviewed. They were asked to answer questions relating to how they understand and feel about the occurrence of intermarriage between South Africans and African immigrants

*Table 2: Demographic information of secondary participants.*

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Ethnicity	Country of origin	Occupation
Paul	Male	38	Zulu	South Africa	Tavern owner
Xander	Male	29	Zulu	South Africa	Debt collector
Grace	Female	24	Xhosa	South Africa	Call center agent
Pamela	Female	27	Xhosa	South Africa	Call centre agent
Donald	Male	28	Igbo	Nigeria	University student
Beauty	Female	22	Zulu	South Africa	University student.

### **3.5 Data collection instrument.**

Data collection was obtained through semi structured interview whereby there was a list of open-ended questions which were adjusted along the way. Semi structured interviews allow liberty for the participants to express their views in their own way but at the same time not deviating from the purpose of the research enquiry. As anticipated some of the interviews were recorded electronically, permission was requested from participants/informants prior to the researcher recording, however the majority of the participants preferred to narrate their stories without being recorded, I was allowed to jot down notes and participants were willing to allocate more time for the interview.

Tutty, Rothery, MA & Grinnell (1996:52) explain an interview as a dialog with a purpose of getting an understanding of the perspective of the person being interviewed. An in-depth interview, or qualitative research interview, according to Green and Thorogood (2009:285) "aims to allow the participant to speak at length, in detail, in ways in which he/she is most comfortable, on a given topic". I interviewed participants using questions which served as topic guides. Holloway and Wheeler (1998:55) describe this process as a semi-structured or focused interview. In this type of

interview, the researcher makes use of questions that are included in an interview guide, with an emphasis on the issues to be explored. Questions about each subject are asked in an open-ended manner (Tutty et al 1996:56). These questions were posed in a way that led to conversations which yielded rich data that highlighted the views and attitudes about the phenomena of intermarriages.

### **3.6 Sampling**

A sample of couples was recruited from Durban. The participants were purposively recruited to participate in the study on the basis that they met the criteria. To locate these participants, snowball sampling was used to gain access to couples that met the inclusion criteria. In snowball sampling the researcher identifies participants who meet specifications of the study and asks them to participate and recommend potential participants (Koerber & McMicheal, 2008)

The researcher used their networks to identify some couples who meet the research criteria. Some of the research participants were recruited from churches in Durban. Participants were approached one-on-one in their social settings. To obtain a sufficient number of participants, couples were then asked to suggest other couples who may be willing to participate in the study. Snowball sampling was used in the study to obtain referrals of people who are willing to participate in the research, this process was repeated until the sample size was achieved. Should a need arise social media can be used to recruit participants.

The inclusion criteria for selecting primary participants for the study was that the participants had to be couples who are intermarried. One spouse must be born South African and the other spouse must be an African immigrant.

#### **3.6.1 Sampling (secondary participants)**

Participants who were members of society were interviewed to gain insight about their perceptions of intermarriage. This was done to get a general idea of how intermarriages are received in communities particularly in Durban where the study was conducted. The size of this sample was limited due to the fact that initially the study did not set out to have secondary participants since the perceptions of intermarriage by society were going to be narrated by couples as they experienced it. The need for secondary participants came about during the interviews with intermarried participants of this study as they mentioned how society has an impact on their marriages. One of the aims of the study was to understand the perceptions social reactions of

intermarriage as perceived by the public therefore it was important members of the public to share their view. This created a need to also amend and include perceptions of intermarriage according to the public as an objective of the study. It is worth noting that although the members of the society interviewed in this study were not intermarried they were in no way representing the views of all members of society in this country as the sample number was limited thus yielding limited views which cannot be used to generalize the perception of intermarriage but only give a perception of the selected few participants of this study.

### **3.6.2 Sample Size**

The sample size of this research was affected by the availability of intermarried couple who were committed to partake in this research for its full duration and also although there is a common occurrence to see intermarried couples in this context it was difficult to find couples/participants who were willing to participate in the study. A common reason for declining to participate among the approached couples is that they did not trust the intentions of this research regardless of explaining it to them and showing the necessary document (ethical clearance), furthermore approached couples felt that participating in the study was going to bare negative consequences for their relationship because of how they perceived intermarriage between African migrants and South Africans to be received in society. To obtain data that is rich it was important to structure questions that enabled the participants to give valuable information that could be expanded through probing. Having such an interview guide enabled for useable data to be collected. The nature of the study was to get in-depth data so a smaller sample allowed for a deep case –oriented analysis to be done when dissecting the collected data.

### **3.7 Research site**

The site where this research was conducting is the city of Durban. Durban has some of the country's major hubs of commerce and is a global city. African immigrants have settled in Durban as a host city amongst other reasons because they seek employment, tertiary education and small businesses etc. This site was particularly chosen because it has attracted a significant number of African migrants which therefor creates a likelihood for meeting and interaction which can possibly lead to the formation of intermarriage. I also chose to conduct my research in Durban as

it was cost effective. The average amount spent on transport R20, to travel from the university and to interview participants.

### **3.8 Data processing and analysis**

“Data analysis is the process of making sense out of data, making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read, it is the process of making meaning” Merriam (2009, 176). Making sense of the raw data helps in answering the questions that were intended to be investigated by the study. This study was examined using Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis. The collected data was transcribed and subject to interpretation. Some of the collected data from the interviews conducted were in the IsiZulu language therefore they were translated to English. Braun and Clark state that thematic analysis is used to detect, analyse and document patterns within data that has been collected. They further say that thematic data analysis presents data in a meaningful way, selecting emerging themes of interest and reporting them. (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher must familiarise themselves with the data they have collected to pinpoint patterns and themes that are meaningful and are of interest Braun and Clark (2006). This analysis involves dissecting the entire data set, the coded extracts of data that has been analysed, and the analysis of the data that you are producing (Braun & Clark, 2006). In this study the researcher used six phases of thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006).

The first phase entails the researcher getting familiar with the data collected. Familiarity with data is achieved by consistently listening and writing down the data verbatim. Braun & Clarke, (2006) state that in this phase the researcher should be immersed in the data to until it becomes familiar. At this point it was important for the researcher to listen to the tape and get themes or points of interest and make sure that the data is presented as it was being said by the research participants. It was imperative to listen to the tapes to check for misinterpretation and omitting of important points.

The second phase is mainly about creating codes whilst reporting responses exactly as the participants stated them. Coding was done manually to identify potential emerging patterns as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006).

In the third phase entailed sorting of codes into potential themes and organising the relevant coded data. As Braun and Clarke (2006) state that researchers should be aware that it is possible that initial codes may merge to form a single theme and some codes may need to be excluded depending on the researcher finding them applicable to the study or not. Basically the purpose of this phase it to sort out the raw data by putting it in themes to form a clear understanding.

The fourth phase involved going over and filtering themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) this is done to reduce the number of themes by merging overlapping themes and removing themes that were not sufficiently supported by the data.

The fifth phase entailed naming and defining themes. Themes are arranged in clear and consistent accounts which go by the narrative extract Braun and Clarke (2006). It is further stated that is important to not only reword or summarise the content of data extracts but to also find out what is interesting about them.

The final phase is the sixth phase which is the actual write up and compiling of the data. These six phases by Braun and Clarke (2006) informed and guided the thematic analysis the data obtained in this study.

### **3.9 Validity and reliability**

Reliability, validity and ethical consideration are an important part of any research study. It is important to tread with caution and honesty when documenting and reporting on the findings of the study as it needs to be credible and conducted in a way that it not harmful to the research participants.

The findings and data presented in this study are those that were relevant to intermarried couples, other data that was not relevant was set aside and not included in this study. It is important to note that not all couples who were approached to be part of the study agreed therefore it is not a representation of all South African and African migrant couples in intermarriages. The specified number of couples interviewed informed the outcomes of this study based on their experiences of intermarried. Information in this dissertation is subject to themes that emerged from the data that was collected.

Patnaik (2013) states that reflexivity is helpful to keep the interview process more participant-centered. It is a process where the researcher constantly examines their own subjective views about the topic making sure that they are aware of how they can influence interpretation of findings. Rosaldo (2003:583) further collaborates this by stating that one cannot completely take away his or her personal feelings and understandings from how he/she interprets, observes and hears. My data analyses were centred on the viewpoints of participants that were interviewed instead of my own understanding of intermarriages.

### **3.10 Ethical issues**

#### **3.10.1 Voluntary participation and informed consent**

Conducting a study in an ethical manner is an important component of research. Before conducting this study, ethical clearance was requested from the humanities and Social sciences research ethics committee. In the process of recruiting participants, a detailed explanation of what the study entailed was given. Those that agreed to be participants were shown the ethical clearance letter and also signed a consent form that indicated that they wanted to be part of the study. It was explained to informants that participation is voluntary and that at any given time should they want to withdraw from the study it is within their right to do so and that there will be no negative consequence in doing so.

#### **3.10.2 Confidentiality**

During the process of data collection permission to record the interview and writing down key points was permitted by some participants. Participants were also asked to give pseudonyms instead of their real names for the purposes of confidentiality and concealing their identity when reporting the findings of the study. Some of the participants were uncomfortable with their voices being recorded as they feared being recognized, so their wishes of privacy were catered to and only written reports of the interview were documented.

Initially the researcher had set out to conduct the interview in the homes of participants as the assumption was since it is their most natural setting they would be comfortable. This was not the case for most couples that were interviewed due to the sensitivity of the study most participants were skeptical about letting the researcher into their private space, overtime rapport was built some couples granted permission for follow up interviews to be conducted in their homes. Couples who

did not approve were respected and interviews were conducted in public spaces that they had chosen. The participants were made aware prior to the commencement of the interviews that there is no financial incentive or reward for participating.

### **3.11 Situating the researchers lived experience**

My interest on the topic of intermarriage was based on my own personal experience of being intermarried. In qualitative research it is important for the researcher to be able to acknowledge that claiming a neutral stance in a given topic is hard to maintain because of our personal experiences, discernment and background. To be able to remove my bias and minimize influence of my experience in the data analysis, I asked participants probing questions which aimed to clarify issues which I felt were not clearly defined or had ambiguous meaning. In this way the participants gave their own meaning to their experiences instead of me interpreting the data based on my understanding. During the stage of data analysis I asked a peer doing postgraduate studies to review my data analysis and compare it to the transcribed data collected from the study to check for emerging themes and if these themes were interpreted in context.

#### **3.11.1 Consequent advantages and drawbacks of this position**

My position of being intermarried assisted me in helping the participants of this study to feel more comfortable around me and lower their defenses. This impacted the data collected positively since participants answered most questions without restraint.

Embarking on data collection required me to have full self-awareness on my stance on intermarriage and how my experience could affect the outcomes of the research. This made a significant amount of administration work. I had to comb through my interview guide to check for questions that are leading or suggestive. To reduce bias I asked participants to also review the results by asking them to see if my interpretation of their responses was accurate. I also made use of other sources of data relevant to the study to support my interpretations.

### **3.12 Limitations of the study**

During the process of conducting this study there were many situations that presented themselves as challenges.

The bulk of research regarding intermarriage is based on international studies that may not necessarily capture the essence of intermarriage as perceived by South Africans and African immigrants. The data is specific to American and European contexts where pioneering research on intermarriage was almost exclusively based on racial differences. South African studies focusing on intermarriages were also mainly influenced by race because of the apartheid era, it is for this reason that there is scarce data cited in this study which is local.

Building rapport and trust was amongst the greatest challenges encountered in this study. I found that the African immigrant spouses were very suspicious of me and my motives for conducting this study. Initially being a South African worked against me as the generally consensus among the participants is that South Africans are Xenophobic so therefore I could be conducting this study to further fuel the negativity and hatred for foreigners in this country. It took patience and transparency to convince people to participate in this study. I do feel that although I managed to get participants in the initial stages of interviews the African immigrant spouses were conflicted in telling their truth about their experiences of being intermarried and what would sound “right”. It was therefore very important for me to be able to identify when this happens and create a space where the participant would feel comfortable enough to share their experiences. Part of creating that environment was done through disclosing that I am also in an intercultural marriage.

### **3.13 Conclusion**

Fieldwork enables the researcher to comprehend a social phenomenon from the participants’ point of view. The chapter outlines the various methods and tools used to gather the data and experiences of intermarried couples. It has given a detailed outline of the research design, methods of data collection, sampling techniques, data processing and analysis, validity and reliability, ethical issues and limitations of this study and also accounting for the ethical consideration employed in this study.

## **Chapter 4: Introduction of the couples.**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This short chapter introduces the reader to the couples who are participants of this study. It gives details about who they (real names not used).the description is given under the themes of socio-cultural background and dating histories.

### **4.2 Meet the couples**

#### **John and Cathy**

John (35) Zulu South African and Cathy (28) Shona Zimbabwean. They were introduced by Cathy's cousin who at the time worked for the same company as John. Prior to getting married they dated for two years. They have been married for three years.

**John's sociocultural background-** John was born in the 1980s in a rural area of Ladysmith (Umnambithi) KwaZulu-Natal. He was raised in a community with black Zulu speaking people. His parents were deeply rooted in culture and spirituality. His father was a well-known healer who attracted many people from neighbouring villages. During his schooling years he never met people who were from other countries or races as he attended a school with only black Zulu speaking students. His family and extended family lived near each other except for those who travelled to Johannesburg to seek employment. It is only after securing a bursary that enabled him to study electrical engineering at a South African university that he met and mingled with people from various race groups, ethnicities and countries. John felt that his upbringing was one which based on Zulu customs and traditions and that everyone followed the culture with pride and respect.

**Cathy's sociocultural background** – Cathy was born in Zimbabwe Bulawayo. Her parents made a living by selling sculptures and ornaments including in South Africa and Botswana. She would come along with her parents to make sales during school holidays. After completing high school, she decided to come live with her aunt who was living here in South Africa. She stated many of her friends are South African and this has helped her to be fluent in IsiZulu and IsiXhosa. Cathy grew up in a family that was well travelled as she has family members who are living in South Africa, Zambia and America.

**John and Cathy's dating histories** – John has always dated Zulu girls and was expecting to marry a Zulu woman. In his family it is the norm to marry within the culture. In contrast Cathy's dating

life was not limited to people from her culture. Her serious relationship prior to meeting John was with a Xhosa man. John's parents were expecting him to date and marry a Zulu woman whilst Cathy's parents were not traditional on partner selection.

### **Ross and Rachel**

Ross (31) Nigerian and Rachel (29) Xhosa South African. They met at church during an all-night prayer from different branches of the church. Ross was immediately attracted to her and tracked her on social media, he finally befriended her on Facebook and asked her out. They dated for a year. They have been married for three years.

**Ross sociocultural background**-Ross was born in Nigeria he recalls being raised under strict Christian rules as his father is a pastor. Days like Good Friday and Christmas were observed in his household. He grew up being encouraged to socialize with Other Christians. He later relocated to London to join his brother and pursue university studies, he described his time there as being enjoyable because of the freedom away from parents and it gave him an opportunity to discover new activities and mingle with different types of people. He came to South Africa with his brother to explore business opportunities after failing to get into university in London.

**Rachel's sociocultural** – Rachel was raised in the Eastern Cape by her grandparents because her parents died when she was very young. Her grandparents valued customs and traditions. In her family it was the norm to marry Xhosa men and marriage was encouraged at a young age. She stated that she was never interested in Xhosa tradition and customs especially when it came to what they expect of women in marriage and that her grandparents knew she was different. At age twenty-one she left home and came to Durban where she first worked as a waitress before discovering her passion for fashion. Her flat mate invited her to church and she became a Christian.

**Ross and Rachel's dating histories** – Ross responded by saying that when he was in London he dated interracially but it never materialized to long term relationships. When he was in Nigeria his dating life was nonexistent. In South Africa he dated two Zulu women before being in a relationship with Rachel. Rachel responded by saying she has dated guys from other ethnic groups within South Africa however it was the first time she dated outside of the country. She further stated, "what I saw from my previous relationships was that they did not fail because of our cultural

differences but they failed because there were problems that did not involve being culturally different, so it was easy for me to date Ross”.

### **Sheldon and Amy**

Sheldon is a 39 years old Nigerian business man who co owns a salon and Amy is a 36 year old Zulu South African woman who a high school teacher. They met in a Salon that Sheldon co-owns. Amy frequented the salon as she was a regular customer. They dated a little over a year. They are now married for six years and have two children.

**Sheldon’s sociocultural background** –was born and raised in Nigeria. He stated his parents were very religious so they raised him and his siblings in a strict Christian way. As he grew he moved away from Christianity and did not practice any religion, this caused tension between him and his mother, however she soon realized that she should make peace with it since he has always been a child who followed his own rules in life.

**Amy’s sociocultural background-** Amy was born in the Eastern Cape but for most part of her life she was living in Johannesburg. She comes from a family that values tradition more than religion although some of her family members are Christians. Living in Johannesburg awarded her the opportunity to meet and socialize with people from various race and ethnic groups.

**Sheldon and Amy’s dating histories-**Prior to dating Amy Sheldon only dated women from his own country even when he came to South Africa he purposefully dated Nigerian women. He share that it took him by surprise to fall in love with a South African woman. Amy had dated men from different ethnic groups within South Africa. One of her long term relationship before meeting Sheldon was an engagement with Tswana man which they ended up breaking off. She stated that her family were okay with her intension to intermarry as she has always expressed she did not aspire to marry a Xhosa man. There was a condition though, that Sheldon should do all the steps leading up to marriage in a Xhosa culture. Sheldon’s parents were happy because they wanted grandchildren and also shocked because he never seemed like the type of man who would get married.

## **Marshal and Lilly**

Marshal is a Shona speaking man from Zimbabwe he is 29 years old and his wife Lilly is a 24 years old Zulu speaking woman. Marshal is an artisan by profession and Lilly is a Masters student in one of the Universities in South Africa. They met through Lilly's friend who was dating Marshals friend at that time. Marshal and Lilly shared that they feel their friends set them up. They have been married for 2 years.

**Marshal's sociocultural history-** Marshal grew up in Zimbabwe but frequently travelled to South Africa because he had relatives who were already relocated to the country. to him South Africa feels like a second home as he has some of the most wonderful memories in life that happened during his visits. His family never really practiced any religion nor were they traditional, occasionally they would go to church on Good Friday and Christmas. He found Christ and got saved in his early twenties and is since a devoted Christian. He is fluent in two South African languages namely Zulu and Xhosa.

**Lilly's sociocultural history-**Lilly was born and raised in KwaZulu-Natal. Her father is a Zulu man and her mother is a Xhosa woman. She was raised according to her Zulu culture since in society the patrilineal family is dominant when parents are married. She grew up also exposed to the Xhosa culture although she would hardly participate in their activities. Under the Authority of her father they attended the Shembe church which states contains both aspect of Christianity and African traditional culture.

**Marshal and Lilly's dating histories-**Marshal stated he never dated but he had sexual encounters with women from different cultures prior to becoming a Christian. When he became saved he practiced celibacy. The first meaningful relationship he had was with Lilly. Lilly stated that she had never dated prior to meeting Marshal because her father was strict and only wanted her to marry a man from their church. She shared that although she was not dating she had a liking and preference of Xhosa men, she was surprised that she would marry someone who is not from South Africa.

## **Lenard and Penny**

Lenard is from the Democratic Republic of Congo and is an engineer by profession he is 41 years old. He is married to Penny (33) who is a graphic designer. They met at a wedding where they

were partners in the wedding entourage. They stated it was love at first sight and they have been married for 7 years.

**Lenard's sociocultural history** –Lenard was born and raised in in Congo in a city called Lubumbashi. He and his siblings were raised according to the Catholic faith and he also attended a Catholic school.in their home Christianity is practiced and valued. He comes from a close knit family, relatives and friends. Lenard's family also values Congolese culture in particular their traditional dressing and cuisine.

**Penny's sociocultural history-** Penny was born in a rural area in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. She comes from a very traditional family. Her father is in a polygamist marriage. She was raised in strict traditional Zulu ways. As a growing girl child she used to attend the reed dance for Zulu maidens. She shared that she is now a Christian who also acknowledges her African culture.

**Lenard and Penny's dating history** –Lenard dated women of different ethnic groups in Congo, he was once engaged in his early twenties but his fiancée past away. Lenard was not anticipating to get married to a South African woman however Penny had the qualities that Lenard valued in a woman. Penny stated she is liberal about dating and has dating across racial lines. She stated that prior to meeting Lenard she has never dated a man who is not a South African.

## **Chapter 5: Experiences of intermarried couples**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The likelihood of meeting and forming relationships between people who are culturally different has increased over the years as interacting across the globe has been made easier using technology and the rate at which people are migrating is increasing. There is a huge body of research that is dedicated to giving an understanding of how these relations leading to intermarriage form and the various dynamics that are involved in them. This research is mostly told from an outsider perspective which lacks essence as it is based on statistics, probability and marriage patterns. This chapter introduces the reader to the intermarried participants of this study and aims to capture their knowledge rich experiences that gives a perspective of their experiences of intermarriage including the challenges and the rewards that come with it.

### **5.2 Analysis: Intermarriage as perceived by the couples.**

This second part of the chapter presents the findings of this research study and highlights shared and different experiences among intermarried couples based on emerged themes during data collection. It echoes the experience of intermarried couples using the guiding literature and theoretical framework. The data was analysed and prominent themes were discovered. To shed a better understanding on South African and African migrant intermarriage this part of the chapter discusses the emerged themes that are in keeping with study objective and theoretical framework. These themes are based on the couples lived experience of being intermarried

#### **Couples motivation to intermarry**

##### **5.2.1 Aligned values and roles**

Murstein (1973:24-25) cited in Cerroni-Long (1985:34) states individuals evaluate others when looking for a partner to determine compatibility. This evaluation process takes place at three stages which are namely stimulus stage, at this stage there is a development of attraction based on “physical, mental, social and reputational attributes”. This stage is preceded by the value comparison stage in this stage they learn about each other’s values, way of life, attitude and communication. If there is a level of compatibility the couple then moves to the role stage. In this

stage couples measure their partners' ability to fulfil gender roles and preconceived roles of the opposite sex. Extract from the interviews expressed the following:

*“The reason that made me consider Lenard as a husband was because he knew what it meant to be a man, he knows how to love me, show compassion and provide for the family”*. Penny

*“I fell for her because she was beautiful, I stayed because she had brains and I married her because she could submit to me but at the same time be herself”*. Sheldon

*“I got married to Lilly because I loved her and it made sense since we are both Christians and share the same belief and also because she carried herself with respect as a woman. Marshal*

These extracts shows that at the initial encounter individuals experience an attraction in the case of most participant the attraction was based on beauty and mannerisms of the partners. A shared way of life and belief system strengthens the relationship. In the case of participants in this study religion namely Christianity underpinned their values. A gender role that prevailed mostly in this study was that of males being providers. Majority of the wives in this study list this as an attractive attribute in a husband.

### **5.2.2 Love and compatibility**

Many people are motivated to get married because they share a feeling of closeness and love towards each other. In this study couples emphasised that it was love and compatibility that influenced them to get married. Responses that were shared by participants were as follows:

*“I fell in -love with Cathy everything felt right when I was with her. We like similar types of things like entertainment we even go to the same church”*. John

*“We were strongly in love with each other but it was not just a feeling, I knew she was good for me because we had similarities so it was easy to be with each other, with think alike”*. Ross

*“We love each irrespective of our different personalities, I found it refreshing to be attracted to someone who is not exactly like me but is understands me “Sheldon*

These couples show that they have common values that influence their basic life orientation, these values and similarities are the pull factors that led them to get married to each other. Sheldon's narrative shows that differences in personality in a couple need not be an area for conflict

especially if their personalities are complimentary to each other. With that being stated it is important to note that in other instances major differences especially in important topic such as faith and religion differences may be a source of conflict if one partner is religious and the other is not.

### **5.2.3 Different and better love experience**

Getting married to a partner who does not share your nationality and culture can offer a new love experience. The female partners in this study unanimously stated that they find their African migrant spouses to be more pleasant to be in a relationship with compared to some of the local men they have had romantic relationships with. Amongst various responses portraying their experience the most dominant ones were the ones discussed below:

*“In all relationships I have been in I have never had love being reciprocated like this. I’m used to being the one who does all the loving and get little in return. Dating Marshal made me see he will make a good husband since he was so thoughtful during our courtship. He knows that as a man he needs to go and work so he can provide for our family without being told to do so”. Lilly*

*“After being in an abusive relationship I took a break from dating when I met Ross he seemed too good to be true, he spoke to me and treated me with respect .He not perfect but he is a good husband who never hits women no matter how heated the argument is he will just walk out and come back later. His good character made me love him”. Rachel*

A study conducted in Cape Town Du Noon by Sanger, She reports that South African women articulated that ‘what they understood as differences between South African men and ‘foreign’ men, claiming that the latter were more respectful of women, were willing to take on the responsibility of South African women’s children, grandmothers and families, as well as their houses’.

These experiences about being married to African migrant men indicate that these women have a positive experience being intermarried as their domestic or home life is well catered for both financially and emotionally.

### **5.3 Reception by the family**

Marriage brings two people and their families together. In the case of some intermarriages spouses do not always receive warm welcome and acceptance into their new families whilst others experience a positive welcome. Some participants in this study shared various degrees of how they felt they were outsiders and could not fit into their spouses' families.

*“They can all speak English but they always make sure they speak Zulu with me even if I ask them to translate they don't. In gatherings they can go on talking as if I am not there”.*

*“I am always excluded from functions and when I ask why I wasn't invited no one really explains. They can talk for hours on the phone with their son but never ask for me. Even if I initiate making calls it ends up being awkward and filled with silence on the other side”*

Interestingly there was a contrasting experience of how some participants were received by their spouses' families. They indicated that their new families were happy to have them as in-laws and made them feel like they are part of the family.

*“The first time I visited my mother in-law in Congo she was so happy I could see I was welcome, she gave me the finest of everything she had. The next day she went with me to the market so I could pick my very first Kikwembe. She regards me as her daughter and now I love her as much as my biological mother”*

There was also a case where initially the family did not receive the partner well but the relationship reached a marriage commitment which in turn influenced how the partner was perceived and received in the family as he had proved his good intention regarding their daughter.

*“My wife's brothers are literally my brothers now we drink together and gym together, after we got married they started liking me, I now ask them why they gave me such a hard time before”*

### **5.4 Negative impact of intermarriage**

#### **5.4.1 Isolation**

The theme of isolation emerged in this study when participants were relating the challenges they encountered as a result of intermarriage. Intermarried couples stated that they felt isolated from the rest of the people. This is because social gatherings are where they are probed about their decision to intermarry, sometimes it because the family excluded their spouse.

*“Sometimes you just see that socializing with people who constantly criticize you about the choice you made to marry a foreigner is a waste of time, I would rather be at home that always having to just and defend my husband”.*

#### **5.4.2 Government institution discrimination**

The couples in this study shared that at some point they have encountered institutional discrimination based on the fact that they are either African migrants or married to African migrants. The department of Home affairs was named as the institution that frustrated intermarried couples. As per the requirements by this department before a South African and a foreigner can be allowed to marry they need to undergo an interview at the department of home affairs which is intended to establish the authenticity of the relationship. Participants shared their experiences as follows:

*“The officials asked me to enter the office by myself and started interrogating me, asking why are you marrying a Nigerian? What happened to dating South African men? Which side of the bed do I sleep in? When I asked if these questions were necessary they told me they are just doing their job”.*

*“So how much did you pay her? We are tired of you guys with your fake marriage”*

*“You women like foreigners you are wanting to marry him today but soon you will be crying, what do you know about him?”*

The experiences shared by the couples who have went for the interview show that there is discrimination based on the mistrust that some employees at the department have towards African migrants. This finding supports the cited literature whereby it is stated by Dodson (2001:75) the government is solely motivated to expose “fake” marriages. In an article in the Sunday Independent (2015) titled *SA women’s club fights xenophobia* women married to Nigerian men shared the same sentiments that they receive maltreatment in government institutions. One participant recalls being told of by officials she tried to apply for free government-issued houses in 2011.

She was quoted saying:

*“They told me that I was not entitled because I am married to a foreigner, and that if I wanted a house I must divorce the man first,” she said.*

### **5.4.3 Stigmatization of intermarriage**

Most couples in this study shared that they have experienced different levels of stigmatization as a result of being intermarried. They felt that their marriages were classified as being inappropriate. This was evident in a response such as the one below:

*“You are with him for the money there is no way a woman can just date a Nigerian with no money. You give him citizenship he gives you money from the drugs”.*

This shows that intermarriage is viewed as a trade of money for citizenship, furthermore it appeared as if there is a belief that in intermarriages particularly between South African and Nigerian are based on the premise that the couple constitutes of a gold digger South African woman a wealthy Nigerian drug lord.

### **5.4.4 Vulnerability of women married to African migrants**

Women in this study experienced being criticized for marrying African migrants whilst South African men are available. They expressed that often South African men would make remarks about how ‘their women’ were being lured with money and taken by migrants.

*“Your love for money led you to be a sellout, who marries foreigners?”*

This suggest that women who are intermarried are perceived to have betrayed South African men and also it shows that there is a sense of ownership of women by South African men which might be indorsed by patriarchy. Statements such as this above-mentioned also put emphasis of how these marriage are viewed as a means of generating income used by South African women.

### **5.4.5 Segmented intergration of migrant spouses**

Sigsworth, Ngwane and Pino (2008) state that for individuals to be included in societies the hosts and migrants need to make a conscious and intentional interaction and co-operation with each other as it is ideal for migrants for the purpose of integration as opposed to assimilation which is about the migrants completely adapting the culture of the host country.

In South Africa when migrants display their culture namely in language it puts them in a vulnerable position of being excluded. Spouses share that sometimes they experienced unfavorable remarks when speaking their own vernacular language but also trying to speak in Zulu was also used against them as their accent was criticized.

*“They tell me speak Zulu, so I try it, they laugh and say it sounds so wrong”*

*“It could be something as simple as receiving a call from home so I speak Swahili they will say speak English man are you talking about us?”*

This shows that whilst African migrants can integrate into other spaces of South African society there are still those spaces that are hard and do not allow for their individual cultural identities to be displayed

#### **5.4.6 Heightened sense of being a foreigner**

A person cannot forget that they are in a foreign country and are culturally different from the native group, however some African migrant spouses felt that being intermarried intensified this feeling of being a foreigner. They shared that social gatherings with their spouses families and friends were particularly difficult. The examples below illustrate this.

*“My in-laws sometimes find me weird, the simplest differences in doing certain things or different opinion in general always gets explained by the fact that I am not a South African. It is so strange to me because in most cases those differences are just personal opinion or individual preference and have nothing to do with me not being a South African.” Cathy*

*“We were once invited to a braai by my wife’s friend her husband just graduated so they had a small celebration. Upon arrival the men were still braaiing the meat and the women were busy with making salads. I overheard women telling my wife to make me a salad that I would eat because they don’t know what salads Congolese people eat. This might have been well intended but I think it would have been more appropriate to let me pick and choose the food I wanted to eat out of the one that was already prepared than assuming I do not eat it or I require a special dish prepared for me just because I am Congolese. In general I think my interaction with South African people has always been about them finding things that would ensure we are very different.” Lenard*

*“I remember when our son was born and the cord thing on his navel fell off after a couple of days, I didn’t think much of it so I disposed of in the bin and my wife was fine with that. When her family came to see the baby they all exclaimed that I threw it away apparently it was supposed to be buried in our backyard. I got so much backlash to such an extent that one of the aunts said straight to my face that what I did made no sense the only reason I did it was because I was a foreigner no person in their straight mind would do that. I was left speechless.” Marshal*

The responses given by participants in this regard indicate that in social spaces there is still a sense of African immigrants being perceived and treated as intrinsically different from South African people. It is a given that differences between these groups exist but it is important to be able to distinguish if they are individual or cultural differences. This will help in avoiding the creation of stereotypes or generalizations about a group based on an encounter with one person who identifies themselves with that group, furthermore instead of these social setting being a tool to create more division, differences observed can be an opportunity to educate each other. The response shared by Marshal highlights the importance of communication, one cannot respect customs and traditions that they are not aware of they need to be told in order to avoid offending each other or doing something that is considered taboo in a culture.

### **5.5 Church as a pillar of strength**

Church is an institution that participants unanimously stated as being the major pillar of support. Although the study is not intended to focus on religion all the participants are Christians. They attributed their successful marriages to being rooted in God and stated that the church leaders were supportive and when needed they took on a parental role.

*“When my family and I were not on speaking terms because they resented me for marrying a foreigner my spiritual parents were there for me and guiding my husband and I to reconcile with the family”. Penny*

*“When Sheldon and I have disagreements the only thing that brings us back to a common ground is our faith. We may have conflicts because of cultural misunderstandings but sharing the same religion and values helps us”. Amy*

The above experiences indicate the importance of the church and common belief system in helping the couples negotiate their marriage life. As stated in literature that church is considered as a third

party and has the ability of influencing the couple it is evident that a positive response from the church community impacts the couple in a good way as they receive social support.

## **5.6 Contact with African migrant home country**

Participants shared that they still maintain strong holds and social networks in their own country irrespective of living in South Africa. They stated that lack of money prohibits them from travelling home frequently however easy communication facilitated by technology compensates for the inability to frequent home. Participants shared that now that they are married to South African this country has to become home as well. Another way they maintain closeness to home is cooking 'home food', playing traditional music that evokes memories.

## **5.7 Making the marriage work**

### **5.7.1 Embracing the differences**

The couples in this study stated that there were differences that existed between them ranging from cultural to individual differences. Some of the reasons were overlooked as they did not cause harm to the spouse or marriage some differences were not necessarily appreciated but could be tolerated and others contributed to the diversity of the marriage. This was well captured in a response given by the participant which stated.

*“In marriage there are rejected differences, tolerated differences and celebrated differences”*

Another participant shared that differences encountered do not need to be a problem area but can be used as a way to learn about each other and get insight about what makes a partner behave the way they do. The participant was quoted saying:

*“Whenever we have a major difference about something we always take time out to understand how we came to have the opinions we believe in and in most cases it comes from how we were raised. In many cases this gives us an understanding of our behavior”.*

### **5.7.2 Respect**

Respect was cited as an important value when working out cultural differences. Couples shared that conflict results from not respecting what the other partner values and holds in high esteem in their culture.

Lenard was quoted saying

*“Sometimes I find some aspects about her culture to be rather strange and mythical but I have to respect them either way because they are important to her. Mocking those means I am mocking her. Respecting her culture does not mean I agree with it but it just makes it easier to coexist”.*

*“I cannot stress how important it is to respect each other’s cultures especially when we are in the company of family and friends, sometimes we may not really understand the relevance and significance of those customs but it is important to honor them as you do not want to cause offense to your spouse and your in-laws.*

Respect is a basic building block of a healthy and satisfactory marriage. Based on the responses given by participants we see that it used as means to accommodate the cultural differences that exist and accept that the individuals in the union have differing cultures that lead to individuals having different worldviews and meaning attached to certain things.

### **5.7.3 Compromise**

All the couples stated that compromising was a big part of how they made their marriages to work and be satisfactory. Compromise to them entailed altering situations of conflict by negotiating for an alternative solution that can be beneficial to both partners. Couples expressed that there were varying degrees of comprising and that sometimes the compromises made were not always mutually beneficial for both parties. The following quotes captured the theme of compromising as follows:

*“We have had to negotiate and compromise on numerous thing but one that was the hardest was the one regarding to food. I add salt when cooking pap but Lenard does not so to him that was unheard of so now we agreed that I will cook it my way and he can get to cook his fried fish even though I do not eat or like the smell of it.” Penny*

*“The food we eat, music and entertainment, celebration of holidays and even were to live was negotiated extensively and compromises were made. I think now we are finding it easier to make compromises because we can see that it minimizes arguments and it is a fair way to make sure that at some point we both get what we want.” Cathy*

The following sentiments about compromising shared by intermarried couples in this study shows that they use compromising to minimize conflict and reach mutual ground. It would be naïve though to assume that both spouse are always happy about the compromise. Intermarried couples need to make sure that compromising is done not only done by one spouse as this could cause resentment both spouse need to actively determine how they will structure their marriage life.

### **5.8 Identity and intermarriage**

Perel (1990:249) explained that ‘intermarriage challenges one's ethnic and religious identity. It forces both partners to clarify the meaning and importance of their respective backgrounds. Intermarried couples have to understand each other's individual identity and also negotiate their own identity as couple. It is important for intermarried individuals to have self-awareness and the ability to identify which significant components that define their identity. Couples in this study shared their experiences of how they negotiated their individual identity and also how they formed a joint identity as spouses.

*‘You know since we grew up in different countries we pride ourselves and sometimes value different things. Once the honeymoon phase is over you are like yaaah.... we are very different. Something as simple as deciding what type of music to listen too becomes an issue to be negotiated. We have made it a priority to have both of our unique cultural practices, beliefs and characteristics present in our home, it is also important not to make assumptions about what your spouse considers to be really important about their identity. Marshal.’*

Marshals response of how they deal with issues relating to identity in their marriage indicates that in order for the marriage to be satisfactory to both spouses both characteristics that make up individual identity need to feature when the individuals create their identity as a couple, furthermore his response suggests that everyday life events need not be taken at face value but they need to be spoken about and clarified and not be dismissed as being insignificant to the other spouse.

*‘I think my identity is challenged firstly as a woman and secondly as an intermarried woman. I say this because Zulu people from my husband's family have very fixed ideas of how and what a married woman should and shouldn't do. I even feel that when we are around them there is no space for my Zimbabwean identity. It is the Zulu way or the highway. They created a mould that I*

*should fit in. fortunately when my husband and I are in in our home I get to be me as much as he is a strong man who prides himself in his ethnicity he understands that we are culturally different, I get to be myself and he has adopted some of my cultural elements especially traditional food.'* Cathy

*'Taking pride in my identity and who I am has made me able to remain true to my roots, however being in South Africa has its challenges when you are a foreigner I feel like the South African community does not like to allow for diversity or should I say diversity that comes with foreigners. It's like conform or be an outcast especially here in KwaZulu-Natal. Within my own home I am free to be a Nigerian man there is no such thing as me being a foreigner, my wife creates that space she embraces my food, my accent and choice of clothing, my English I can say I find it easy to maintain my identity when I am not in public.'* Sheldon

Cathy and Sheldon are both African migrant spouses who experience the external pressures of third parties namely family and the society when negotiating their identity. Both the participants share the same sentiments that they are free to be themselves and display characteristics of their identities when they are in private spaces in their homes, both their spouses are open to incorporate aspects of their identity. They experience third parties as having set and predetermined identities for them.

## **5.9 Communication**

Gudykunst & Nishida (2001) define communication as a method of sharing and creating meaning between individuals. In this study couples highlighted the importance of communication as follows:

*"We always talk about stuff that bothers us we learnt very early in the marriage that assuming your spouse knows what you mean and what you want is not a good idea because you end up jumping to the wrong conclusions, whilst you could have just ask for clarity"*

*"We have made it a priority to communicate effectively during our engagement we attended premarital counselling we were taught the importance of talking to each other and how to communicate in a respectful way. This leads to less fights".*

If couples want to make their marriage meaningful they have to learn to communicate effectively this entails frequent interaction in a tolerant and respectful way. Communication is important in all types of relationships but it is particularly important in intermarriages because of the difference in culture which may affect body language, tone of voice and even meanings assigned to words. Communication in marriage will help spouse to avoid assumptions and it will give the couple clarity about issues they encounter.

### **5.10 Major life adjustment**

Intermarried couples need to adjust to their dual culture marriage. Tseng (1977:39) names various types of adjustments which can potentially occur in intermarriages. These adjustments are namely:

One way adjustment which is explained as only one spouse assumes the culture of the other. Alternative adjustment both cultures are purposefully chosen and alternated at certain times. *Mid-point comprise*: Spouses jointly agree on a resolution between themselves. *Mixing adjustment*: an amalgamation that reflects both cultures is regularly adopted and finally *creative adjustment*: spouses decide to give up their individual cultures in favor of a new behavior. In this study couples referred to various adjustments they had to make as a result of them being intermarried.

*'My diet has changed, we agree on the starches like pap but we both have different ways of cooking it, most of my food choices are influenced by my husband'*

*'Food and diet has definitely a major adjustment, I have even learned to cook some of the dishes. We take turns in cooking traditional meals from our cultures but most time of the week we cook normal less time consuming meals that are not really from our culture'*

Participants also believed that adjusting to intermarriage was an ongoing process that needed time, however most of the participants mentioned that it was not necessarily the cultural aspects that required adjustments it was the thought issue of South Africa now being home. The participants were living in South Africa prior to being married as most of them came to the country because of economic and career prospects but that was temporary as there was always an intention of returning home at some point, being intermarried brings about a permanent stay for them because their South African spouses were not keen to relocate and also because couples felt that the economic state was not conducive for relocating.

They further stated:

*'Adjusting is very hard when the in-laws are visiting as cultural differences are more pronounced, something that my husband would consider a mistake my mother in-law would consider it an offense to their culture, so it is easier when it is the two of us'.*

*'As husband and wife we normally try to adjust to each other's personalities and preference in things. When we have family visiting us our cultural differences are highlighted, it becomes like a competition to see which will be the dominant culture'.*

The experiences of couples suggest that they adjust easier without the presence of family, furthermore it shows that adjustment of couples happens in more than one level and some of those adjustment entail life changing decision such as staying permanently in South Africa.

#### **5.11 Using intermarriage to stop prejudice portray African migrants in a positive way**

Some couples felt that their marriages served more than their personal needs and gratification but also helped in showing the public that it is possible to be intermarried to a South African or African migrant without any of the stereotypes associated with these types of marriage being true. Some of the participants were quoted saying:

*"Getting married and staying happily married to Amy shows her family, friends and community that not all Nigerian men are bad or involved in dodgy dealings. It is possible for two people to put aside their cultural differences and instead discover how similar they are"*

*"I go to Nigeria and come back without being eaten or sold. You know many South Africans think if you go to other African countries with your husband you are definitely not coming back. They used to tell me horror stories of how South African women leave the country and come back as corpse but here I am still alive". Amy*

*"Being in an intermarriage puts you as the non-South African spouse in the spotlight, everything you do is used to generalize the people of your country of origin, so by being good to my wife I am actually doing away with the beliefs that foreigners are bad people who want nothing but to use South African women for papers, also those people who choose to be friends with us or remain as family get to see us in another light for example my wife's friends were skeptical of me and my business they had this picture that if a man is a Nigerian he is paddling drugs behind the scene*

*and using a normal business as a front, they now see Nigerians can be good citizens who excel in business, academia and other positive pursuits. This change of perspective also applies to how my people view my wife as South African woman, as they are known to be promiscuous, gold diggers and lack submission in relationships and marriage. My wife is neither of those things.*

In the South African context both groups, that is African migrants and South Africans have certain beliefs about each other. Intermarried couples viewed their marriages as an opportunity to change the views of those people who are close to them and to dispel stereotypes. This education can help to facilitate better interaction, tolerance and socializing between these two groups. It was noted that based on the responses given it was mostly the Nigerian spouses who were concerned about wanting South Africans to see a less publicized side about them, this can be attributed to the issue of Nigerian nationals being amongst the most criticized foreign group.

### **5.12 Primary language**

‘The family is the cornerstone for language acquisition and maintenance of minority languages’ (Pauwels 2005, Schwartz 2008) cited in Igboanusi, & Wolf. (2010). In most cases intermarried couples have to choose a language that they both understand in order to communicate with each other. In the case of intermarried couples there may be a change whereby the individuals in the marriage do not speak their home languages with each other but communicate using a secondary language that is common or understood by both of them.

*‘English was the common language we spoke. When I left Congo I was not fluent in English but fortunately I met my wife after I had settled in South Africa for a couple of years so I learnt it during that time, I speak a little bit of Zulu here and there because I need to get around in interacting with other people. My wife on the other hand does not speak my home language except for greetings.*

*‘ I am always lost when Lenard starts speaking French, it just sounds nice to the ears even when I can see he is angry whatever he says in French does not sound like angry words. We both speak English very well but sometimes I get the feeling we would understand each other better if we knew each other’s home language sometimes English can be so restrictive for example I can think of a joke or something in isiZulu and when I explain it to Lenard in English it will kind of lose its meaning. Lenard is already speaking a bit of Zulu and I am yet to speak French’.*

It is very important for couples to have a good method of communication in order for them to enjoy their marriage. Skowroński , Fong , Ho , Ying, Fernandez, Waszyńska (2014:268) mention that most intercultural couples come from backgrounds that differ and have different home languages but it is important for them to find a common language to them to facilitate their interaction and communication. The couples used English as their primary language of communication in their marriages. All the African migrant spouses were able to speak English prior to being intermarried. It was noted that some African immigrant spouses have been able to learn native languages like isiZulu in contrast to their South African spouse who do not know any of their spouses' home languages except minimal words and greetings. Galloway (2006) explains that couples may settle on a common language to communicate but barriers can still arise because of difference in communication behaviours, emotion and body language changes. This statement was supported in this study as one spouse sometimes found communicating in English limited the depth of their interaction and meaning was lost in translation.

### **5.13 Approaches to cultural differences**

It would be naïve of couples to ignore or pretend that cultural differences do not exist in their marriages. Being from different cultural background and country of origin it is bound for these differences to occur. The couples related their stories of how they have experienced a difference in culture and how it impacts their marriage.

*'I know that in Africa dowry is taken seriously, but I feel the Zulu people hold it significantly higher than others during negotiations my representatives had to approach with caution every move is capable of causing offense. Something as simple as to not keeping time agreed on because of maybe traffic delays warrants a fine in the Zulu culture, to me that was shocking. Nevertheless I got an understanding of what I was getting myself into'.*

*'The wedding preparations highlighted how much we differ culturally, each family insisted on their culture being honored, we had planned on a religious wedding but with the intervention of our family, we ending up with three ceremonies. Although we had not planned for this we had to find something positive about it because it was already happening. We both participated in the traditions that our families' value and it was good to have that experience .Surprisingly that was the only time differences were put aside by our families.*

Falicov (1995) as cited in Dariusz P. Skowroński et al. (2014: 267) mentions that ‘when these couples enter a marriage, they make a transition which permits them to amend their cultural values and belief system, therefore, making it possible for them to still uphold their own personal cultural values and beliefs’. The couples in this study for most of the time viewed cultural differences as opportunity to grow and develop skills like tolerance and also adapt to the culture of their spouse. Understanding their spouse’s culture enabled them to gain insight on their worldview and explain their behavior. Cultural differences were more pronounced when family was involved.

#### **5.14 Preconceived gender role and current gender roles**

Each partner has expectations and assumptions of what their spouse is supposed to do and which duties to perform. Typically men and women are socialized to certain gender roles. These gender roles are predetermined by society and vary according to culture. In this study couples mentioned how they negotiated gender roles in their marriages and they shared how coming from different cultural background impacted the expectations they have of each other.

*‘I come from a single parent family so for me it was always a reality that I cannot rely on a man to finance my life. I know that usually the man provides in a marriage but in my experience it is just a theory so I never expected it from my husband. I had difficulty letting Ross pay for everything for some reason it makes me feel not in control, he finds it important maybe it is a male ego thing.’*  
Rachel.

*‘I am a man so I provide, she is a woman she is the home maker. That’s how it has always been or so I thought. My wife is independent which a good thing is but our main struggle is getting a balance. I think it makes so much sense if she sticks to her roles as a woman and let me handle my part. Even from the time of our mothers women stuck to their own thing and the same applied to men culturally they all had different roles to play, but in this day everything is negotiated for the sake of keeping peace.’* Ross

*‘when Marshal and I started dating I admired how he was a self-sufficient man he kept a clean apartment, did his own laundry and cooked for himself, apart from his miss matched décor there was nothing else that needed my touch as a woman, however we go married and things changed, he now expects me to do all the house work. I do need help especially on days where I am really*

*busy with my varsity work. He reasons my saying as his girlfriend it was not my duty to attend to his needs but as a wife it is my duty to do so.*

*'I am not strict when it comes to who does what in the house as long as we are both doing something I am happy with that. As a man I am able to do any type of housework. I clean, do washing and cook but I do that when it is just me and her. When we have visitors I expect her to do it. I find it exhausting to explain to people why as a man I am in the kitchen attending to affairs of women. In my culture men and women have separate duties', Lenard*

*'We discussed gender roles in premarital counselling we live out according to the Word of God. I do my part and she does hers. If one is struggling then we lend a helping hand otherwise man and women are called to have different yet important roles. I wouldn't let her suffer if she was not coping with her duties times have changed women work in formal employment and in the home.*

From the above narratives it shows that couples do have gender role expectations which are influenced by their culture and religious beliefs and some couples have chosen to renegotiate these roles in their private space to suit couple needs especially since women assume dual roles when it comes to house work and working to earn a living. The responses from the couples vary, some have had to find a way to keep a balance on who does what in the marriage, whilst some have set expectations of women and men domains when it comes to the roles that each spouse is supposed to play. The responses also showed that upbringing has an influence on the perception of gender roles. One couple whereby the wife was raised by a single mother felt that as a woman she was supposed to be able to take care of herself in all aspects including financially, she had never seen provision modeled by a male figure in her life ,this led to her having difficulty in letting her husband provide financially for her. It was also observed that one couple had different gender roles assigned for different stages of the relationship at the dating level there was no expectation for the girlfriend to perform duties associated with women but they were expected when the relationship progressed to marriage

### **5.15 Merging and forming new cultures.**

Intermarriages starts out with two individual from different backgrounds and cultures. When sharing a life these cultures needs to find a way to coexist so that there can be harmony in the

marriage. The respondents explained how they negotiated cultural differences and formed new ones that suited their marriages.

*'For us it was pretty straightforward when it came to culture, we both agreed to do our own thing obviously we did not forget about our individual cultures but they do not influence us that much, the parts we took were ones we could both agree on'. Cathy*

*'We usually combine both our cultures on important events, but also without us making any effort we just find ourselves creating something new. For us it really is not a big deal because we make our own rules'. Lilly*

*'We try to pick certain things from both our culture but honestly sometimes it is difficult because it is not easy to strike a balance. What happens is that we avoid conflict by creating a new way of doing something that is not linked to any of our cultures. This works to keep peace but I feel sometimes it comes at a cost of us not being in tune with our heritage'.*

The participants in this study share a similar experience when it comes to negotiating issues pertaining to culture. They all to some extent rely on merging certain parts of their cultures, however problems can arise when deciding which cultural aspect to include or ignore. The couples in this study have resolved this problem by forming cultures which are unique and exclusive to them as a couple. One participant explained whilst this has a positive impact in reducing conflict it comes at a cost of losing one's culture.

### **5.16 Social reactions and social support as perceived by the couples**

Social support and social reactions varied according to the couples. Most opinions about intercultural marriage are evoked by curiosity or by the prejudice that is held about certain groups of people. Negative views regarding the marriage may be a source of stress for the couple and positive views may have the opposite effect thus contributing to affirming the intermarriage. Some aspects of their experiences had similarities for example in the case where they perceived social reactions regarding the marriage as negative. The following quotes give accounts of how they felt:

*"When I started dating Marshal my friends did not take our relationship serious, they all thought I was just playing and I was going through a phase of dating an exotic man, when he proposed*

*and payed lobola they were shocked and wanted to know more about his finances as they believed it must be the money that made me agree to marry him” Lilly*

*“I have lost a friend because I married a Nigerian, I asked her to be a bridesmaid and she always had excuses of why she could not show up when we needed to meet. My other friends told me that she was skeptical about being around Nigerians and she felt I was making a mistake. Up until my bridal shower she was still trying to convince me to call of the wedding. I unfortunately had to end the friendship”. Rachel*

*“when I told my friends about my intention to propose, they all said it is okay for me to have fun with a South African woman but I shouldn’t wife her, I shouldn’t take her home. They said I am complicating my life. “Ross*

*“My wife and I are each other’s support, we love our families but they are not good for our marriage. We learned this while we were still dating. Whenever we had problems and would ask for advice they would just saying whatever problem we are having was because she is South African and I am Zimbabwean”. Marshal*

*“Cathy is so amazing, it is a pity my family does not see that. I know they do not approve of our marriage. They always make an issue about culture but can’t even see how our cultures are so similar. They don’t love my wife so obviously they are wishing we could get a divorce”. John*

*“Being a Zulu it is hard having to explain to peers why you have a foreign wife when there are so many available South African women, I have had it all insults and name calling until I decided to move away from those who were rude towards my wife. All I can say is that getting married to Cathy showed me who my real friends were.*

*“My mother is very supportive, in fact my whole family back home loves my wife each year we spend Christmas together, they love Penny and she loves an respects them. Lenard*

*“We are so blessed our families are so present in our lives, my father in particular adores Lenard he even gave him a Zulu name, they treat him like their son. My husbands’ family is also supportive of our marriage my mother in-law is the best, although I cannot understand what she says half the time I know that she likes me, she is always sending me African fabric as gifts and she was so happy to sew my wedding dress.*

The above experiences of how couples perceived their intermarriage to be accepted or rejected highlight the many attitudes and beliefs that intermarriage is viewed in society. These narratives indicate that there are those people who believe that intermarriage is based on curiosity and desiring a partner that is “exotic” as expressed by one participant. Based on her experience dating and a man who is not South African was perceived to be a passing phase in her life and therefore should not be a committed relationship. The same experience was shared by her husband who was advised that he should not marry or take home a South African woman. What was evident based on their story is that both group (Nigerians and South Africans) in this case hold certain perceptions about each other. Rachel’s friends believed that Nigerians have money which qualifies them to be chosen as spouses, whilst Ross’s friends believed South African women are fun but not necessary an option when deciding to marry.

### **5.17 Opening up to new experiences**

Participants in this study felt that being intermarried opened up a chance for them to explore the unknown. These experiences were namely acquiring and new language skill, indulging and learning to cook new cuisine and traveling. The couples perceived these new life experiences as being impacting them positively and exposing them to a different world view. The quotes below capture how they experience being open to new experiences:

*“I was never a person who knew much about seafood, but getting married to my husband was an eye opener his diet contains a lot of fish I now know different kinds of fish and different methods of preparation”.*

*“I don’t think I would have left South Africa and travelled to other parts of the world, having my in-laws in Congo means travelling back and forth during the holidays, I have now discovered that I actually like travelling. I have been to three African countries so far and I plan to see the world beyond South Africa”.*

### **5.18 Internal challenges of intermarriage**

#### **5.18.1 Raising children in an intercultural Marriage**

Couples from different cultural descent have to overcome added trials when it comes to raising children. Usually culture influences and informs the individuals’ perceived ideal form of raising children including discipline, which religion the children should be affiliated to and raised under.

When intermarried couples do not share the same views about this it becomes a source of conflict in their marriage.

*“My wife and I are usually in agreement regarding issues of our marriage and family life but when it comes to teaching our son right from wrong she is too lenient. She subscribes to a no yelling and no hitting rule which I do not support. I grew up being disciplined with physical punishment and I do not hold it against my parents. She on the other hand is a new age parent who spares the rod and spoils the child using time out as a way to discipline our child. We are both black and African I had no idea that child punishment would be an issue for us”.*

The respondent above highlighted a very common issue that some intermarried couples struggle within this scenario he took it for granted that he and his wife are black Africans and therefore assumed that their methods of discipline children will be the same. Couples in this situation need to find common ground which is in the best interest of the child when it comes to disciplining their kids. If it is left unresolved it can potentially cause resentment between the spouses.

### **5.18.2 Religion and intermarriage**

*“We are both Christian but before we got married we were off different denominations was part of a charismatic Christian church and he was a traditional Catholic. Culturally as a woman once you get married you are now a part of your husband’s church. I find it so difficult to adjust my faith and what I have believed in for most part of my life and what makes it worse is when my views are not considered in our Christian life including how we minister our faith to our children”.*

When asked to elaborate on this the respondent shared the following response:

*“My husband wanted our baby to be baptized at three months and I did not agree to this because it makes no sense for us to do it so early because she is a*

*. Baptism is something she should choose for herself when she gives her life over to God and she is actually aware of what she is involving herself in. I felt pressured to do this and be part of it because for him and his family that is how things are done.*

*“When we got married I had to change my church, which I was fine with since he is also attending a Christian church. My problem is that I cannot adjust to this new church I am from a church where you can be expressive and worship your God, however his church is more traditional and routine each Sunday the service is*

*predictable. I feel there is no room for spiritual growth. I have spoken to him about this but he feels that I am undermining his authority as a man and going against submission to him.*

### **5.18.3 Individual identity**

*“While I was single, decision making was much simpler because I mostly had to consider only my feelings about certain issues and obviously there was only one culture to take into consideration. My culture made me who I am now here we are with a second culture from my wife’s side that I also need to consider. Surely this changed who I am and my certain parts of my belief system because.”*

“The moment you step out of your race or culture you immediately challenge the already existing identity you have because your spouse will influence you with their culture. It can be a good experience if you both communicate well and solve conflict as it happens respectfully and with honesty”.

These experiences from the participants show that that there was a change in how they defined their identity after being intermarried and that this was a result of influence from their spouses culture. These responses suggests that intermarried couples experience a stage where they need to redefine their identity as it becomes flexible because of being influenced by another culture.

### **5.18.4 Culture preservation**

Marriage has for many years been considered as an institution that preserves and transmits culture. In the case of intermarried couples each spouse comes in with their own culture, preserving two cultures can pose a challenge to the couples as it is not straightforward as in marriages with spouses who come from the same culture.

*“ Initially we had a bit of a challenge when it comes to the issue of food, we had to have a conversation when it came to cooking cultural meals because it would be done separately which did not make sense since we lived together. We agreed to at least try each other’s food before dismissing it. I must admit though that some food from her culture require a major adjustment to my taste buds. She does eat some of the food from my country and cooks them independently which I am very pleased about now, but it took some work to get where we are now about food.”*

*“When you intermarry your children cannot completely carry out your culture because they are raised by parents with two competing cultures. Let me give you an example, in my country you circumcise your boy child it’s just how it is there is no debate. For my wife circumcision is not cultural not even necessary so my wife was against it and said it should be the child’s choice when he grows up. It was a big issue because neither of us wanting to compromise and our families got involved .Although it was resolved to a certain extent I know there is some underlying issues but it had to be done.it is unfortunate that circumcision has a different value for my wife and I”.*

Issues in intermarriage relating to culture are mostly likely to surface within the relationship, couples need to find ways to negotiate cultural issues in a way that is beneficial to both spouse. Evidently from the quoted response being intermarried does affect the transmission of culture and its preservation, therefore it is the duty of each couple to have conversations of how they plan to keep their traditions and customs and how this has implications on raising their children.

## **5.19 Conclusion**

It is evident that intermarriages between South Africans and African migrants are met with many challenges that impact how their marriages are understood. The motives about being in an intermarriage are preconceived in most cases. There is a lack of positivity in how African migrants and intermarriages are viewed. There is no law prohibiting these marriages to occur however there are social consequences for those who are intermarried. There are participants who shared that they are well supported by family however they fare lower than those who felt their marriage was in a hostile environment.it was also evident that these marriages do come with positive aspects to those who are intermarried as they view it as a learning experience that introduces them to new culture, language, food and way of living. Based on the narratives of the couples the family and society at large highly influence the state of the marriage as this forms part of their environment. Third party involvement to certain extent can be controlled by the couple as they have the ability to let certain things within their relationship however this control does not extend to the laws pertaining to migration and marriages between South Africans and non-South African nationals. This chapter gave account of how couples experience intermarriage and it also documented the similarities and differences shared by the couples and how they navigate their marriage life.

## Chapter 6: Intermarriage as perceived by the public

### 6.1 Introduction

This segment of the thesis addresses and reports the views of randomly selected members the public about their perception of intermarriage between South Africans and African immigrants. It is important to understand the environment in which these marriages form therefore it was appropriate to include the members as this would give insight of how they perceive intermarriages and therefore show how these perceptions impact intermarriage between African migrants and South Africans. It discusses the results and emerged theme of the study and relates these results to other relevant literature and concludes by offering a summary of findings.

### 6.2 General perceptions of African immigrants

Participants were asked to give account of what they think of African migrants and shed light about how they perceive them. There were both positive and negative perceptions, some of the responses were mainly under the themes of criminal activity that migrants are said to participate in, taking women and Jobs belonging to South African men and competing with local business. These are some of the responses that were given by participants:

*“I think they are opportunists their economies are not good back home now they came to South Africa to make a living at any cost. Even township shops and check out West Street, point and South Beach they are everywhere”.*

*“I don't know much about them but I know they like to work, the only bad thing is that they can work for little money so now the employers prefer them over us because we know our worth”.*

*“I think some of them are good and they have a strong work ethic, they do any type of job and work collectively obviously there are those few who do crime to get money but overall they are good”.*

Based on the above response it is evident that most participants views regarding African migrants are formed based on their economic activity. They are seen as being a threat or competitors to local businesses and people who are seeking employment. With that being said there are those participants who admire their work ethic and their solidarity in working together to make a living.

### **6.3 Reasons for intermarriage between African immigrants and South Africans as perceived by the public**

Most interviewed participants cited the exchange of money for citizenship documents as the main reason that makes couples decide to enter an intermarriage. South African Women were said to be used as drug mules and were lured using money and marriage as an incentive. Only two participants responded by saying that love between two people is an influencing factor that leads to intermarriage.

*“People actually fall in love and decided to get married, it’s just like any other marriage the only difference is being from different countries”.*

One respondents answer implied that African migrants have needs as men and so the decision to marry local women stems from wanting someone to fulfill their sexual and domestic needs.

*“A man cannot live alone, these foreigners need someone to cook and clean and perform wife duties (pauses and laughs) if you know what I mean, once they make enough money they go back home to their real wives, they just use South African women because of their love of money”.*

Based on this response the participant indicates that marriage between African migrants and South Africans is based on trading off gender roles based duties for money.

*“I think they offer an alternative to South African men. They are loving and provide well for their children so South African women want this stability and then it becomes a good decision to marry a foreigner”.*

### **6.4 Pro and anti-intermarriage between South Africans and African immigrants**

It is worth noting that majority of the women participants were in favor of intermarriage and those who were against it were men. The reasons given for approval was based on the provision of financial and emotional needs in the relationship by African immigrants.

*“Foreigners know how to love and respect their women. I have never seen a woman in a relationship with a foreigner that was treated badly. You become his queen and your children never suffer”.*

The aligning of values was also stated as a reason to intermarry. Participants who were pro Intermarriage shared the view that what is important is for couples to share the same values and way of life in order to successfully intermarry.

*“It does not matter which country a person comes from what matters is his/character and values. You are not getting married to the country but you are marrying the person, if you have things in common it will be easy to move in the right direction”.*

*“You cannot miss out of love because of difference in nationality, it’s about the persons beliefs, morals and respecting the things that you find important if that is covered then you can get married”.*

Smith & Hamon (2012:191) state that “values are human appraisals of what is desirable, worthwhile, and proper. Based on responses from participants it is evident that individuals seek those who share a similar life perspective, morals, ethics and ideals, these values make life meaningful.

It was a shared view among male respondents who were anti intermarriage that South African women are gullible and easy to entice using money, and the marriages they have with foreigners is a sham.

*“Why would anyone support these fake marriages? Our sisters are sellouts but soon they will regret getting married. Amakwerekwere azohamba and they will be left behind.*

Although there were respondents who boldly declared their approval or disapproval of intermarriage, there were those who seemed like they had pressure to say what was socially acceptable this was evident when they were responding to the question which was asking should if they are in support of intermarriage or not. One participant was quoted saying:

*“I not sure what to say, well... I wouldn’t do it personally. I don’t want to sound Xenophobic but I Just don’t see those people being serious about South Africans.*

Campbell & Herman (2015:713) refer to this need to give a socially normative answer as a common problem facing research on attitudes as social desirability bias. They state that respondents feel pressure to reply in way that is in accordance with what is expected by society.

## **6.5 Fear as a barrier to intermarriage**

Many participants of this study mentioned fear as a reason to not consider intermarriage. Uncertainty and fear of the unknown influences the public. Participants who felt they would never intermarry stated the following:

*‘ I would never marry a foreigner because he does not know my culture and I don’t know his, we have different beliefs so we would never last in marriage he would be better off marrying a woman from his country who understand his ways ’*

*‘ I cannot marry a foreigner because I do not trust them. I do not know the intentions they have with South African women. So I would rather stick to South African men since I know what to expect of them.*

*‘ I hear so many bad stories about foreigners and human trafficking so I would not want to find out if they really do happen or not. It is hard to stay married now imagine if you marry someone who is not from your culture.*

The above responses indicate that the participants view the difference in culture as a barrier to intermarry. Also some of their fears come from the general perception of African immigrants put forward by the media as there is no portrayal of positive relations between South Africans and African migrants. Their responses also show that they are suspicious of African migrants in such a way that they do not even want to consider the prospects of forming romantic relationships that might lead to intermarriage. They also raised a valid point regarding the challenge of marrying someone who is culturally different from you as it has been said that it poses more challenges for couples compared to marrying someone from a culture similar to your own.

## **6.6 Stereotypes and prejudice against African immigrants**

The perception in general about African immigrants is based on stereotypes and sometimes unfounded arguments. Participants were asked what they thought of African migrants in general males were of the belief that immigrants are self-serving and have ulterior motives for coming to South Africa. One participant was quoted saying:

*“Foreigners come to our country to take and destroy, unfortunately it’s no longer business only but also our women and young girls. So, I don’t like them.”*

Another male participant stated that he did not have a problem with African migrants except for Nigerians. He argued that:

*“Other foreigners are fine, I say they can stay, Nigerians must go when you turn on the news any crime situation has Nigerian involved for drugs, prostitutes and fake things, it is always on the news. The others are good they just make money in a good way.*

*“You can marry other foreigners but not Nigerians as a woman you will not be safe they can kill you and no one will find you and I heard they send you overseas to drop off drugs. Zimbabweans and the ones from Congo are usually good.”*

The above sentiments expressed by participant further highlight the role of the media in shaping perceptions that locals hold regarding African migrants in the country. The findings of this study are that African immigrants are not perceived in the same way, perception varies according to countries and Nigerian in particular are described in a negative way. This finding is collaborated by Landau (2005) cited Pineteh(2015) when he said that South African stereotypes about Africans have continued to affect the relationship between locals and African nationals, triggering nativist discourses and ‘generalized and impassioned anti-foreigner sentiment’. A study about marriages between African migrants and Japanese women conducted by Schans (2012:380) shared the same finds regarding stereotypes and prejudice directed towards African migrants and intermarriages. The study revealed that initially family and friends did not share a positive response because they did not approve of their children marrying men from Africa. The main reason that parents were negative about intermarriages was that they believed that their daughter were used as a means of acquiring citizenship and that Japanese culture and African culture were not well-matched. A participant stated that “her parents basically believed that all Africans in Japan were criminals Schans” (2012:380).

## **6.7 Problems that result from intermarriage**

### **6.7.1 Intermarriage between African immigrants and South African women undermines local men**

Respondents viewed intermarriage as a means used to undermine them. They felt that African migrant men with the exception wanting citizenship they marry them out of spite. Respondents had the following to say:

*“I really believe that foreigners come to South Africa with a plan to dominate business and economics, enter through our weakness, which is women and concur through having children with them. I mean really what better way to ensure your stay in South Africa then to get married to a local woman and be a father to her children. Their women fight their battles and government will not deport them as they don't want a fatherless nation.”*

*“Have you noticed how foreigners portray themselves as the better men in comparison to us? They always boast to have more money, more love, generosity and bigger private parts. They think they are the answer to failed relationships in South Africa. How come they don't reserve this treatment for women in their countries? If we really want to know who they are we should see how they treat the wives from their own country.”*

*“foreigners just like to show there is nothing really amazing about them they are also typical men even worse they hide who they really are, at least with us South African men we make it clear from the start what you see is what you get. We do not impress women using money because we earn it through hard work not selling drugs and being involved in corruption to get easy money.”*

### **6.7.2 Loss of culture and language**

A major theme was loss of culture and language was cited by most of the participants in this study. Participants feared that intermarriage disrupts cultural transmission and this affects the children born by intermarried couples.

Participants said”

*“Imagine me a Zulu man having a sister who marries a foreigner now they have kids. What will that kid speak? What will his name be? I can't teach him anything about my culture he needs to*

*go to his father to learn his culture, but the father won't take him to his country because he has a wife"*

*"People should stick to their own group, the children will be confused, even the couple will be confused which culture to follow that is why you see them turning white they always speak English"*

The sentiments shared by the participants highlight that they associate intermarriage with loss of culture and speaking indigenous languages. Kalmijn (2015:247) states that the children of intermarried couples usually associate with the native group and have contacts with them. This association enables them to have similar values to the native group which better equip them to be integrated to society. Although this is a positive characteristic of intermarriage Kalmijn (2015:247) writes about a contrasting idea, which he states as the stigmatization of children born by intermarried couples. He states that if one of the parents belongs to a visible minority group. Based on the above response of the participant it can be said that he does not consider them to be integrated into society instead the fact that they are the children of a 'foreigner' creates a barrier to impart cultural values

### **6.7.3 Fatherless children**

The participants identified intermarriage as problematic when it came to the children that are conceived out of these marriages. They claim that after African immigrants have accumulated enough money they leave South Africa and go back to their home countries leaving children who do not know their paternal family. Participants alluding to the theme of fatherless children mentioned the responses below in relation to the theme.

*'Foreigners are here to make money, it's just that South African women don't want to listen so they have babies with them. As soon as the man has saved enough he goes back to his home country and we are left with the responsibility to become father figures'*

*'Foreigners have wives and children in their homes, when they get to South Africa they will pretend to be single and attract women who then have kids with them. The foreigner will go along with this because he wants papers once he gets them obviously he will get better opportunities in the country and now call his wife and children to come down to South Africa. He will then leave the South African woman and her children. This leaves us with a problem of children who are unwanted.'*

These two responses indicate that they perceive intermarriages as marriages of convenience. The male participants who responded to this theme feel that the responsibility of the children falls onto them after the fathers have abandoned the children. “South Africa is one of the countries in the world with the highest figures of father absence (Richter et al. 2012:2; Richter et al. 2010:360; Freeks (2016:6)” as cited by Faze (2017). It is estimated that 2.13 million children in South Africa is fatherless, and 9 million grow-up without fathers, a tremendous fatherhood challenge for the country (Dube 2016:2; Frazier 2016:6) ”as cited in Faze (2017). These statistics indicate that there is an existing crisis of absent fathers in South Africa but they cannot be used to prove or disprove the sentiments held by participants as the statistics do not state whether they are also inclusive of children born to African immigrant fathers or not.

### **6.8 Intrusiveness of African immigrants**

Some participants in this study shared that they felt African migrants were intrusive and frequented most spaces that are typically occupied by Black Africans in the country. Participants shared their experiences off how they perceived African migrants to be intrusive. This theme emerged when they were asked to give their general perception of African migrants.

*“Foreigners are everywhere, it is like everyone is moving into South Africa there is no space even in the township they are there not just for business but know they are our neighbors even staying in RDP houses”.*

*“We are competing with them for everything and you can see they have that thing of we are all Africans so we should share everything, houses, jobs, schools and hospitals”.*

“Since the 1990s, politicians and government institutions have been reinforcing the message that South Africa is being “invaded” by “illegal immigrants” who contribute to crime and are a drain on the country’s limited resources (Human Rights Watch, 1998; Neocosmos, 2008; 2010)” cited in Jearey-Graham & Böhmke (2013:23). In the study by Jearey-Graham & Böhmke they found that some participants believed there is a flooding of foreigners who make use of state resources that are already scarce and compete with locals for resources. “This implicates stereotypical notions that are circulated by political and media sources which blame malfunctioning state structures on the foreign flood” Jearey-Graham & Böhmke (2013:35).

## 6.9 Conclusion

Participants that were interviewed provided an account of how they perceive African immigrants and intermarriages between African immigrants and South Africans. The response they shared highlight the various factors that exist in society that impacts intermarriage. In the South African context when trying to understand the occurrence of intermarriage it is inevitable that one addresses the issue of xenophobia as it has shaped the identity of African immigrants and affects how they are perceived and treated. Since there is an already existing dislike of Africa migrants intermarriage further fuels the competitiveness as some of the participants viewed African migrants married to South African as ‘taking and stealing their women’. The results shows that there is a significant amount of negativity, mistrust and dislike that surround intermarriages. The motives of intermarried couples are inspected.

The influence of media in portraying African immigrants and intermarriages to South Africans further perpetuated the one dimensional view of intermarriages as a transaction of citizenship for financial gain whilst neglecting that there are other factors that can lead individuals to intermarry. In contrast there were participant who held a positive view regarding intermarriage and the motives behind being intermarried. There was a sense of praise and admiration of African migrants when it came to how they are perceived as hard workers and good providers for their families. When it comes to understanding how intermarriages between South Africans are perceived by society there is no one straight answer but it was noted that in this study female participants generally had a positive attitude towards African migrants and intermarriages compared to their male counterparts who hold the belief that these marriages are a further indication of how African migrants undermine South African men. It was also noted that the disapproval of intermarried couples was not entirely based on the dislike of African migrants but it was based on economic factors. Participants shared the belief that these marriages would attract more African migrants and prolong the stay of those who are already in the country because of family ties, thus putting strain on the already insufficient business opportunities, jobs and government resources.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion and critical appraisal of the study**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The decision to get married is one of the most important decisions a person can take. Depending on the context in which the marriage occurs intermarriage can come with greater challenges in comparison to marriage between people from the same culture or ethnicity. To some individuals this differences are an enriching experience which adds value to their lives and experience of married life. This chapter aims to engage with the aims and statements of purpose of this study by stating how they were achieved. The findings of each aim are presented and critically discussed. This chapter further states conclusions drawn from the narratives of intermarried couples and members of society. Recommendations to various stake holders are made and the gaps for further research in this area are identified.

### **7.2 Key Conclusions: Summary of findings based on objectives of the study**

#### **7.2.1 Objective one: To understand the dynamics and factors leading to intermarriages.**

This objective was set out to explore what are the reasons that lead people to intermarry and what other factors influence the decision to intermarry. In this study it was discovered that reasons that led to African migrants and South Africans varied for each couple and that as cited in literature there was a correlation of some of the reasons that were stated as foundation for the formation of intermarriage. These factors were namely on an individual and contextual level. This objective made it possible for a comparison of motives of intermarriages between natives and migrants to be made with existing international literature and factors identified through the narratives of intermarried couples in this study who gave account which is applicable to the South African context. Some of the motives cited in the literature correlate with the finding of this study. Couples do agree that sharing similar values, having shared interest and having the opportunity to interact in institutions such as the church and also the opportunity to interact at social gatherings did influence and enable the dating process to begin thus leading to intermarriage.

### **7.2.2 Objective two: To understand social reactions and social support as perceived by intermarried couple.**

This objective intended to gain an understanding of how Intermarriages are received by family, friends and key support networks of intermarried couples. Literature highlights the significance of social support in the formation and maintenance of intermarriages. Lack of support can be seen as a stressor for the couple. In this study some couples identified the church and spiritual parents as their main source of support and guidance especially when confronted with marital conflict and challenges. Isolation and severed relationships emerged as themes as an outcome of this objective. There were some couples who shared that they had to part ways with family and friends because they were against their marriage. They stated that at some points they were criticized for marrying their spouse and their marriages were not accepted. There were couples who had a positive reaction and received support from their networks and family. These couples experienced having strong relationships with their in-laws. There were two other noteworthy experiences related by the couples of how they perceive social reaction and social support towards their marriage. They recalled that at the initial stages of announcing of their intention to marry they were faced with friends and family who criticized and disapproved of their choice in spouse based on the cultural differences and in some cases stereotypes and prejudice about the nationality of the spouse. After getting to know the spouse and seeing the marriage thrive over the years some families and friends had a change of heart as their preconceived ideas and stereotypes about intermarriage were dispelled.

Subliminal negative reactions were also experienced by some couples whereby in family and other social settings their motives to intermarry would be questioned in subtle ways and in some instances there would be a clear portrayal of judgement for opting to intermarry. The lack of social support affected the couples however most of them ended up using it as a point of resiliency in their marriage as they took it upon themselves to make it work and share the commitment to work together in support of each other and the marriage.

### **7.2.3 Objective three: To investigate if intermarriage is and indicator of assimilation or inclusion of the migrant spouse in the South African context.**

Scholars have often hypothesized that intermarriage is a final stage of assimilation and integration of migrant spouse to their host nations and have and have said that it is the litmus test which indicates the broken barriers of interaction between migrants and natives. This objective was formulated to assess if African migrant spouses were integrated in society as a result of being intermarried with a South African spouse. It was taken into consideration that in order to assess this objective there was a need to first locate how African immigrants are perceived and how these perceptions can shape how they experience their integration to mainstream society. It was also important to assess the South African context in which these marriages take place as it would also impact how migrants are assimilated to society in the midst of occurrences such as xenophobia and the disconnected identity of South Africans from other African countries which perpetuate the discourse of them (African migrants) and us (South Africans).

African migrant spouses all shared the same view that they felt that even though they are married to South Africans they are not integrated to society. They shared that even though some of them had positive experiences of being accepted by their spouses' families this did not translate into being accepted into the greater society. Migrant spouses felt that being intermarried presented more challenges for them on top of those that are experienced by migrants not married to South Africans. Their motives for marrying South Africans put them under scrutiny as they are suspected of having ill intentions.

A study by Atanda (2011:110) pertaining to marriages between South Africans and Nigerian nationals also attest to this experience as one of the findings was that the honor and integrity of Nigerian spouses was often scrutinized by the wives family and relatives. A major challenge which highlights how they are disintegrated from society is the one they experience when they use government institutions namely department of home affairs among others. In a study about marriage between Cameroonians and South Africans by Pineteh (2015) Cameroonian migrants shared that they did not consider themselves to be assimilated as they faced discrimination on the basis of having South African wives as the police would question the legitimacy of their marriages irrespective of being able to show them the required documents Pineteh (2015:81).An interesting finding in this study as described by some South African spouses is that they felt discriminated

and to a certain extent treated like foreigners because of their choice to intermarry African migrants, the use of their husbands surnames presented a challenge as they would often be asked how they got these surnames and why are the names of their children not South African names. One participant from Zimbabwe stated that she is fluent in isiZulu and has an accent of a Zulu person this enables her to communicate effectively and she passes off as a Zulu speaking woman but for some reason should it be known that she is Zimbabwean the way she is treated changes negatively. This further shows that assimilation has not taken place and that being intermarried or learning the hosts languages or way of living does not necessarily mean that there will be acceptance by society. Within the sample of this study intermarriages exist but they do not indicate integration of migrant spouses as it is shown that these marriages exist in a hostile environment most of the times.

#### **7.2.4 Objective four: To discover the challenges and benefits associated with intermarriages.**

When individuals look for a potential marriage partner they assess the potential gains and losses of being married to that individual. As with any other marriage, intermarriages are also characterized with aspects that can be either deemed as challenges or as beneficial. Couples identified numerous challenges they associated with being intermarried. It was noted that majority of the challenges mentioned did not stem internally from the couples but it was as a result of external factors. Themes which were stated as challenges pertaining to this objective included lack of social acceptance, language barrier and institutional discrimination. The benefits of intermarriage as themes emerged were deconstructing stereotypes, learning a new language and food options, getting to travel and having a liberal world view and cultural understanding.

#### **7.2.5 Objective five: To understand perceptions of intermarriage from the point of view of members in society.**

This objective intended to gain insight about how selected members of society understood, felt and thought about intermarriages between South Africans and African migrants. This objective gave an idea about the context in which intermarriages exist. The perceptions of intermarriage held by society members whether positive or negative greatly affect how intermarried couples experience their marriages views or actions by the public can either be stressors or motivators of the marriage. The themes pro-intermarriage and anti-intermarriage encapsulate the perceptions held by society regarding intermarriage. There was a gender divide when giving opinions about intermarriages,

majority of the females believed that there were intermarried couples who had good intentions about their marriage and are actually in love whilst most males believed that these marriages were transactional in nature. When giving reasons or motives believed to influence couples to intermarry most men in the study mentioned negative reasons namely exchanging money for citizenship and exploiting South African women among other reasons. Women in the study viewed the motivation to intermarry as based on love and respect that is offered by African migrants and also their ability to take care of their families financially. Another finding regarding the perception of intermarriage between South Africans and African migrants was that some members of the society felt that it tampered with transmission of culture because children born out of these marriages would be of mixed cultures..

### **7.3 Future research and recommendations**

#### **7.3.1 Research**

In this research it was discovered that African migrants are not perceived in the same way, there are those who are more scrutinized and associated with various illegal activities, future research can therefore focus on African migrants according to each country they come from instead of presenting them as a homogenous group of people whilst society perceives them differently. There is a need to also understand why there is a hierarchy of exclusion of African migrant groups according to their countries of origin as indicated by the experiences of Nigerian male spouses of this study.

Another area of research to expand in regarding intermarriages between African migrants and South Africans is that of gender. Based on the participants of this study females seemed more tolerant and welcoming of these marriages compared to the males. Most South African spouses were women, therefore it would be beneficial to conduct a study on intermarried couples where the African migrant spouse is a woman and the South African spouse is a male.

Intermarriages with African migrants have an impact in changing the demography of South Africa, this is as a result of children being born by intermarried couples. At a later stage studies should be conducted to gain an insight of the way they are raised, the way they identify themselves and if this cultural blending can cause strong ties that can enable intermarriages to exist in a conducive environment where there is social tolerance.

Whilst conducting this research there was a gap in literature that addresses the occurrence of intermarriages in an African context. International theoretical frameworks were used as the benchmark or point of reference in understanding the dynamics of intermarriage. Although there are similarities in how marriage is understood around the world there are however different meanings and rituals attached to marriage depending on the context in which they occur therefore it is imperative for research to be conducted in an African context. This will help give an understanding of how individuals who differ ethnically, culturally or religiously negotiate marriage.

### **7.3.2 Policy and government institutions**

Whilst searching for literature pertaining to statistics of intermarriage between South African and African migrants I found none. To my knowledge in South Africa there is no data base that documents the number and prevalence of intermarriages between these two groups. This poses a challenge because we cannot respond to what we do not know or understand. Keeping track on the prevalence of intermarriage is hard without a data base. The same applied when trying to get a figure of how many African migrants are living in the country, different sources gave varied figures that had a significant difference, however what was highlighted is that there is a huge influx of African migrants in the country. Creating a data base would be helpful in monitoring trends and patterns of intermarriage and knowing an estimate of how many African migrants are in the country can help in ascertaining how those figures affect the marriage market in South Africa. There needs to be a defined integration method aimed at African migrants that is all inclusive and aids in their integration. This policy needs to be able to be translated to practice by various stake of government intuitions and civil societies this will help intermarried couple to be able to navigate their married with reduced stress as many participants expressed their frustration of how they are treated when they are at government institutions particularly the department of home affairs. The government needs to train its employees to sensitize them about multiculturalism and how to practice their code of conduct as enshrined in their Batho Pele principles whereby people are to be treated with integrity and human dignity. Currently in South Africa prior to being married couples wanting to be intermarried undergo an interview at the department of home affairs. This interview was introduced as a measure to determine and curb fraudulent marriages between South African and foreign nationals. Participants in this study unanimously shared the sentiments that it was

conducted in an unprofessional manner, the questions asked were inappropriate and they depicted the officials personal feels and dislike of African migrants and the idea of them getting married to South Africans. I suggest that there should be a regulated method of questioning that will be able to determine the legitimacy of the intent to marry without compromise the dignity of the couples being interviewed.

### **7.3.3 Communities and the public**

The results yielded from this study show that even though African migrants might be to a certain extent active and integrated in the economy and even interact with members of society in social setting such as sharing close living proximity and attending churches and social clubs this does not translate to them being assimilated. In order for assimilation to occur both South African and African migrants need to have an openness to have positive interactions. This can be done by both groups being accepting of each other and denouncing ideologies of violence and xenophobia against African migrants.

### **7.3.4 Media**

The media has an important role to educate and inform. As previously stated in the literature review the media is highly influential in how African migrants and intermarriages are perceived by society. Within the South African media there seem to be a reciprocal relationship between the public and the media. Stereotypes and misconceptions generally held about African migrants by society shape or influence print media publications. Reports about African migrants and intermarriage are sensationalized. This is not to say that there are no negative stories but there are positive stories pertaining to African migrants that are under reported or not reported at all. To date there are hardly any media publications that positively highlight intermarriage between these two groups, their focus is on exposing marriages that are fraudulent. There is a need for media to publish facts for example in the case of putting alarming headlines about the number of African migrants coming in the country without referring the reader to the source of where the figure was obtained. There need to be a balance in reporting both positive and negative stories pertaining to migrants and intermarriage.

## 7.4 Conclusion

This study set out to understand the lived experiences of South Africans and African migrant nationals who are in intermarriages and to also gain an understanding of how these marriages are perceived by the society. Using the qualitative approach the study was able to capture the lived experiences of those who are intermarried and also for members of society to relate their views regarding intermarriage of this nature. The literature that was reviewed served as a guideline through which this study was modeled. Literature reviewed in this study also served as comparison for similarities and differences in findings.

Undertaking this study enabled an excluded part about African migrants to be explored. This study focuses on gaining insight on their marriage life. The study has made a contribution in existing literature in the following way:

- It has added on the scarce literature regarding African migrants in their private, love and marriage life.
- The study provides the various theoretical frameworks to understand the dynamics and reasons for intermarriages in a South African context.
- The study documents clearly that intermarriage is not just between the couple but there are structural and contextual factors that interconnect and influence how the couple experience their marriage.
- The study gives an understanding of how the interviewed participants perceive intermarriages between South Africans and African migrants.
- Finally it discusses issue pertaining to social cohesion and integration between South Africans and African migrants and how these issues impact on intermarried couples.

Based on this study and other cited studies regarding marriage between African migrants and South Africans intermarriages are frowned upon in society they still continue to happen. Couples in such marriages are faced with adversity as there are negative connotations surrounding the reasons that lead them to intermarry. Couples in this study mentioned love and value alignment, attraction and shared interests as motivating factors to get married. This was a contrasting view compared to that shared by members of society who were asked to share their thought on what

leads the couples to intermarry. Whilst the members of society participants stated that money in exchange for citizenship was the driving force behind intermarriage the intermarried couples did not list this as a reason to intermarry. The exchange theory used in many studies pertaining to intermarriage collaborates the views of members of society interviewed in this study who attribute monetary value and exchange of prestige as a cause of intermarriage. Money as a theme amongst intermarried couples came up in the form of provision of household and family needs. Women in this study stated that they felt financial provision from their husband was important but they did not explicitly state it as a reason to intermarry. Previous studies have conveyed that intermarriage shows an integration of migrants to mainstream society but in the case of the migrants they have not experienced this integration as barriers between are very pronounced irrespective of living proximity and interaction. Learning the language did not help with integration and assimilation however it helped with navigating everyday life where interaction in most case was in IsiZulu and it helped with improving communication between the spouses. It was also noted the attitudes and negative perceptions towards African migrants directly affects their marriages to South Africans as noted by couples that majority of their challenges and conflicts came about from external stressors unlike the expected cultural differences.

The rejection and acceptance of the couple's intermarriage plays an important role in how they experience their marriage. Some of the couples at first stated that their families and friends were are against their marriages and this led to conflict between them. Couples explored alternative places where their need for social support could be met, therefore the churches that they are affiliated to become their family.

It was evident in this study that the disapproval of these marriages stems from the dislike and negative identity assigned to African migrants. In the South African context the hypothesis that intermarriage indicates the highest level of assimilation is disproved in the context of this study based on the experiences of interviewed participants. As previously discussed some African migrant spouses mostly stated that they encounter discrimination and exclusion at societal level and institutional settings and being barely tolerated by the family members of their spouses. Instead of them being integrated into society their spouses were now given 'foreigner treatment'. In this case it shows that those who go are against the norm of marrying a South African spouse face negative social consequences. In order for intermarriages to have a better reception in society there

need to be a shift in how African migrants are perceived. Intermarriage also has internal problems that stem from within the couples interaction. Coming from different cultures and countries where each partner is socialized according to the cultural beliefs. It is imperative for couples to have open communication regarding cultural differences as this will help in reducing conflict whilst confronting the challenges they face.

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## **Appendix 1: Declaration of consent**



Project title: Perceptions of intercultural: The lived experiences of South Africans and African foreigners in intermarriages.

### **RESEARCHER**

Full Name: Andiswa Sindane

School: Social Sciences

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I ANDISWA PRETTYANGEL SINDANE, Student no 211514757 am a Master of social sciences (anthropology) student, at the school of Social Sciences, at the University of KwaZulu Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: Perceptions of intermarriage: the lived experiences of South Africans and African foreigners in intermarriages. Through your participation, I hope to understand your perceptions various aspects of your experiences regarding being in an intermarriage. Please sign on the dotted line to show that you have read and understood the contents of this letter.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed, there will be no information identifying you.
- The interview may last for about 1 hour however it can be adjusted to suit your schedule.
- The information that you give in this study will not be used against you, and the collected data will be used solely for purposes of this research.
- Your participation in this study is voluntary, you can choose to participate, not to participate or to discontinue your participation. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.

- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Video equipment		

**DECLARARTION OF CONSENT**

I..... (Full Name) hereby confirm that I have read and understand the contents of this letter and the nature of the research project has been clearly defined prior to participating in this research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Participants

Signature.....

Date.....

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

## Appendix 2: Interview guide (Intermarried couples)

### **1. What are the reasons or influences that made you marry someone from a different culture/country from yours?**

#### Probing Questions

- What were those reasons based on?
- Did you plan to intermarry?

### **2. What are the views of family/ friends regarding your marriage?**

#### Probing Questions

- Were these view negative or positive?
- Did these view affect you personally in any way?

### **3. How have these views influenced your marriage?**

#### Probing Questions

- Elaborate on how they affected your marriage (if they did) and to what extent?

### **4. What are the challenges and benefits of marrying someone who is culturally different from you?**

#### Probing Questions

- Share challenges and benefits at a personal level (between you as a married couple) and at a societal level as you experience

### **5. How do you resolve differences with your spouse?**

#### Probing Questions

- Do you have a certain method or strategy?
- Does being culturally different affect how you resolve conflict?
- what

**6. What were your culturally preconceived notion of married life of the roles of husband and wife?**

Probing Questions

- How did your culture influence your expected role as a husband/wife?
  - Did your expectations match your current roles in marriage?
  - Did a negotiation of roles occur?
  - How do your expectations of husband and wife as prescribed by culture differ/similar from your spouse?
7. What factors do you think lead to the success of these marriage and conditions which must exist for the marriage to be able to work?

Probing Questions

- What are the factors at a personal level (you and your spouse in your private life) and at a societal level?
- 8. Do you perceive your marriage to be different or similar to the ones of people who married within their own cultural group?**

Probing Questions

- How is it different/similar (?
  - Elaborate on your perceived differences/similarities
- 9. Do you have any social support from friends and family?**

Probing Questions

- If yes, how is this support shown to you?
- If no, what are the reasons for the lack of support?
- Do you feel that the support is enough
- If you do not receive any support from friends and family how are you coping?

## **10. How have you adopted to your spouse's way of living?**

### Probing Questions

- What are the things that you have had to change to accommodate your spouse?
- Were these changes easy?
- How do you feel about this experience of change and adjustment?

## **Appendix 3**

### **Interview guide (secondary participants)**

#### **1. What are your general thoughts about African migrants?**

- Your thought about them being in South Africa
- The activities/work they participate in
- Your thoughts and experience of how you have encountered them
- Things that first come to your mind regarding African migrants

#### **2. What do you think are the reasons that South Africans and African migrants get married?**

- How do you think individuals reach the decision to intermarry?
- According to you are those reasons stated by intermarried people valid?
- Do you think these reason are the same as for people who are married to people from their own ethic, cultural group or country?

#### **3. Would marry an African migrant?**

- Give reasons why you would
- Give a reasons why you would not?

#### **4. Are you in support or against intermarriages between African immigrants and South Africans?**

- Your reason for being in support or against intermarriages between African immigrants and South Africans?
- What do you think of South Africans who have opted to intermarry with African immigrants?
- What impact or effects if any, do you think these marriages have in South African societies.

## Appendix 4: Ethical clearance letter



12 February 2018

Mrs Andiswa Sindane 211514757  
School of Social Sciences  
Howard College Campus

Dear Mrs Sindane

Protocol reference number: HSS/0060/01BH

Project title: Perceptions of Intercultural marriage: The lived experiences of South Africans and African foreigners in Intercultural marriage

**Full Approval – Expedited Application**

In response to your application received 25 January 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....  
Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)  
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

jpm

cc Supervisor: Vivian Ojong  
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Maheshvari Naidu  
cc School Administrator: Mr N Memela

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